MODELING AND MOTIVATING

EFFECTIVE PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

THROUGH BIBLICAL PREACHING

A THESIS

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BY

PETER T. MEAD

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DEDICATION

To my wife, Melanie.

The most discerning listener of sermons,

the epitome of a biblical wife, and the best friend I could ever have.

Thank you.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The preacher exerts significant influence over the listeners through the preaching event. Through careful study and preparation, the message of a biblical text is formed into a sermon that seeks to effect change in the lives of those who hear it. However, the influence of a preacher is broader than just the specific purpose of any given sermon. When preaching, the preacher models how to study a biblical passage. At the same time the preacher is either motivating or de-motivating listeners' personal Bible study. This thesis-project is specifically concerned with training preachers to model and motivate effective Bible study through preaching. This thesis-project presents a theological rationale, a survey of the relevant fields of study, and a training seminar for preachers. The goal is that preachers will preach in such a way that their listeners know how to study the Bible for themselves by the example presented, and want to study the Bible for themselves due to the manner and content of the presentation.

CHAPTER 1

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

Preachers influence. Preachers preach in order to influence lives. Expository preaching by nature intends to influence lives in line with the biblical passage(s) preached. A critical ingredient in preparing a sermon is the determination of a clear purpose for the sermon. The purpose is, like all aspects of an expository sermon, determined in the study of the specific biblical passage and in consideration of the specific audience.

In the preaching event, the preacher has a unique opportunity to significantly influence the hearers. That influence is not limited to the primary objective of the given sermon – the specific purpose. Robert Mager states, "People influence people . . . but do you know just how you influence people? Do you know that you can have a great deal of control over the favorability of your influence?"[1] In an event as central to the weekly church schedule as the preaching of the Bible, it is important to understand clearly the influence that is being exerted. This is true not only in terms of the primary focus of the sermon, its specific defined purpose. There is also a secondary objective that should be considered. This "secondary but significant" objective is the focus of this thesis-project.

In preaching a biblical sermon, the preacher will influence the personal Bible study habits of the listeners. Many factors determine whether that influence will be

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[1] Robert F. Mager, *Developing Attitude Toward Learning*, 2d ed. (Belmont: Pitman Learning, 1984), 3.

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positive or negative. However, neutrality is not an option in this regard and the preacher should be intentionally pursuing means by which to wield a positive influence in this respect. Expository preaching influences the Bible study habits of listeners. *This thesis-project is concerned with training preachers to model and motivate better Bible study while preaching.*

The situation in many preaching situations today is that preachers are unintentionally exerting a negative influence on the Bible study habits of their listeners. Some preachers fail to motivate their listeners to personally study the Bible, some actually de-motivate their listeners. At the same time, some preachers model unhealthy approaches to Bible study, thereby exerting a negative influence, even if people are motivated to copy the model in personal Bible study. Others are creating a strong desire among their listeners to study the Bible and are equipping them to do so. The preaching event is a unique opportunity to model good hermeneutics and motivate listeners to pursue personal Bible study.

Importance of the Study

Most, if not all, expository preachers would affirm that their listeners should also spend time in personal Bible study outside of the church meetings. Furthermore, the desire would be that the people also study their Bible using good Bible study habits – effectively applied hermeneutical skills. Yet if many preaching situations unintentionally exert a negative influence on personal Bible study, there is a problem.

Why is this problem important? First, because the issue of a preacher's influence on listener's Bible study habits is apparently unaddressed in the training of many

preachers or preaching literature. [2] Books on expository preaching generally do not go beyond a brief reference to the subject. For example, Vines and Shaddix give a list of the benefits of expository preaching, which includes, "Expository preaching models good handling of the Bible."[3] Yet a brief reference as a benefit in some books on the subject does not mean the subject has been developed or addressed. Largely this subject goes unmentioned, and where mentioned, it is not developed in any practical way. It is assumed that expository preaching is a good model, but the specific means by which the preacher exerts influence in this area, both positively and negatively, remain undeveloped.

Second, because it is clear that even if a preacher is only concerned with certain goals or one sermon purpose in the preaching event, this does not change the fact that unintended outcomes still occur. As Mager asks, "Do you know just how you influence people?"[4] If unintended outcomes result from preaching in a manner uninformed about this subject, it is important to address the subject and then influence preachers to be aware of their influence and then do what is necessary to minimize negative influence and increase positive influence.

Third, unintended negative outcomes are not just a possibility. They do occur. In listening to sermons in a variety of settings, it is evident that many preachers are

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[2] This claim is based on the personal experience of the writer having studied preaching with three North American seminaries, as well as from informal enquiry about other institutions. Extensive reading of books, journals and magazines on the subject of preaching or homiletics has also yielded no substantial treatment of the subject. Hershael York and Scott Blue, in an article on application, briefly mention that the pastor's preaching and approach to the text will largely determine how the listeners read and understand the Bible. This fact is "almost universally overlooked." Hershael York and Scott Blue, "Is Application Necessary in the Expository Sermon?" *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 80.

[3] Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 31.

[4] Mager, *Developing Attitude Toward Learning,* 3.

inadvertently influencing the Bible study habits of their listeners in a way they would not intend. For example, a preacher may refer to the Greek or Hebrew text behind an English translation in order to add clarity or authority to a point of explanation, yet by doing so may de-motivate the listener from personal Bible study because they have not studied these languages. It may be worth the risk for the gains achieved through this choice, but the preacher would be better equipped to make that choice if they were aware of the possible negative influence.

Fourth, this problem is worth addressing because the possible positive benefits are so great! The preacher does not control all influencing factors in respect to the Bible study habits of listeners. So it is important to keep expectations realistic. However, the preacher does have significant influence. In what other setting does the typical believer have the opportunity to observe a trained "expert" handling the Bible? If this influence were rightly used the result would be listeners more motivated to study the Bible for themselves and better equipped to do so. No matter how much can be achieved through the unique opportunity of the preaching event in church, how much greater the life change if sermon listeners were also active and effective Bible students throughout the week? As the famous saying goes, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."[5] The possible benefits are so significant that preachers should actively seek to wield their influence to this end.

In reference to the teaching situation, Mager states, "We are far more concerned with influencing how students are able to perform *after* the course is over, *after* our

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[5] Generally attributed to Lao Tzu.

influence is discontinued."[6] In terms of personal Bible study skills and habits, the

preacher should be concerned to influence how listeners are able to pursue this after the

sermon is over, after the Sunday morning influence is discontinued. "But if this goal is

worth achieving, it is a goal worth doing more about than just talking. If it is a goal of

value, we must act to achieve it."[7]

Description of the Project

The core of this thesis-project is a three-session seminar for preachers entitled

Building Better Bridges: Preach so that your listeners will study the Bible effectively for

themselves. The seminar is designed for those in a regular preaching ministry, who have

previously received some training in preaching. The seminar will cover the following

areas:

- The Influence of the Bridge Builder: Introduction to the concept of a preacher's

  influence in the Bible study habits of their listeners. The key principle of

  modeling.

- The Bible Study Bridge: A hermeneutical model appropriate for both the preacher

  and the listener

- Building Better Bridges: The key principle of motivation. Practical instruction for

  each stage of a sermon, how to model and motivate better Bible study habits

  while preaching

The outcome of the training seminar is that the participant will be able to prepare a

sermon that positively influences the personal Bible study habits of the listener.

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[6] Mager, *Developing Attitude Toward Learning*, 8, italics original.

[7] Ibid., 9.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The focus of this thesis-project is on the influence of preaching on the Bible

study habits of the listener. In order to present the biblical and theological principles on

which this project is based, this chapter will begin with the role of the Bible in the life of

the believer. It will move on to consider the role of the local church in respect to the use

of the Bible by its members, thereby setting up the third section that considers the role of

preaching in both motivating and modeling Bible study. In conclusion, there will be a

brief presentation of the hermeneutical model for the project – the Bible Study Bridge,

and a summary of the biblical convictions that underlie what the preacher is seeking to

motivate – personal Bible study among the listeners.

The Role of the Bible in the Life of the Believer

In the Bible

The Bible has a critical and unique role in the life of the Christian. Foundational

to the faith of the believer is the reality that God has spoken. God has revealed Himself

at various times through the prophets, and then ultimately in the person of His Son,

Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2). The Bible, both the Old and New Testament, is the written record of

that divine revelation. Although the believer living today was not present when the

revelatory events and teachings first came, they are not spiritually disadvantaged because they have access to the Bible – God's Word to humanity.

Since the ultimate source of the Bible is God Himself, the Bible has an innate authority in the life of the Christian. In light of the verbal plenary inspiration of all Scripture by God Himself and the resulting inerrant and infallible canon (in its original documents),[8] the Bible is understood to have divine authority to the extent that any given translation accurately reflects the original text. Thus the response of the believer to the Bible is to be the response appropriate to the very word of God Himself (1Th. 2:13).

It is through the Bible that the message of the gospel is communicated, and consequently, believed. As Paul wrote to the Romans, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). The message of the gospel is the message believed at the initiation of the Christian life. Indeed, the immediate cause of new birth is the message of the gospel, the word of God (1Pet. 1:23, 25).

Once initiated, the new Christian life continues to be influenced by the Word of God.[9] The Bible is absolutely critical for spiritual growth. If Christian spirituality is developed by the Holy Spirit working in a regenerated person over time,[10] then the Bible is the preeminent tool in His repertoire. Gordon Fee states that, "In the New Testament, therefore, spirituality is defined altogether in terms of the Spirit of God (or Christ). One

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[8] René Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture,* trans. Helen I. Needham (Salem: Sheffield Publishing Company, 1969, 1992), 71-79.

[9] Mark Dever discusses the central role of the Word of God in the life of the believer, categorizing it's influence by its life-giving and sanctifying effects. Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 42-52.

[10] Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life,* rev.ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 12-13.

is spiritual to the degree that one lives in and walks by the Spirit; in Scripture the word has no other meaning, and no other measurement."[11] In Paul's letter to the Ephesians he commands them, "be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). The result of that filling included singing, gratitude toward God and reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:19-21). During that same season of his life, Paul also wrote to the Colossians, instructing them, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16). In notably similar language the result of that indwelling word would include singing, gratitude toward God and reverence for Christ (Col. 3:16-17). For Paul it is evident that Christian spirituality is intimately connected with the ministry of the word of Christ in the life of the believer. The same Spirit who inspired the Bible is the Spirit growing spiritual maturity in the believer, hence the centrality of the Bible in Christian spirituality.

Jesus prayed for his followers in John 17, after assuring them in the previous three chapters that the Spirit would be sent to them. The apostles believed because of the words Christ brought from the Father (Jn. 17:8), likewise the followers who would come after the apostles "believe in (Christ) through their word" (17:20). Subsequent to belief, in the context of an antagonistic world system, the followers of Christ are to grow. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (17:17). Spirituality is the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer, and the Holy Scriptures are His vital tool.

John further develops this emphasis through his teaching of abiding in Christ, not only in his gospel (e.g. Jn. 15:4-5), but also in his first epistle. For John, spirituality is closely tied to the mutual abiding of believers in Christ and His Word in them. Peter

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[11] Gordon Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 5.

Adam states that "In 1 John we find a spirituality of the Word."[12] Keeping the

commands of Christ (1Jn. 2:5; 3:22) is possible because "the word of God abides in

you" (1Jn. 2:14; cf. 2:24; 5:10).

In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul emphasizes the importance of the Bible in the life

of the believer. Godliness is directly related to knowledge of the truth (Titus 1:1).

Godly living for all groups is to be in accord with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1). All

aspects of spiritual growth; teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness,

are to be found throughout "all Scripture" (2Tim. 3:16).[13] The result of such growth is

the equipping of the believer for every good work (3:17). Consequently, Timothy is

urged to handle the word of truth rightly (2:15), preach the word (4:2; cf. 1Tim. 4:13),

and entrust it to faithful men who can subsequently teach others (2:2). Paul

demonstrated his own value on the word by requesting the books, especially the

parchments (4:13), and declaring his confidence in the efficacy of the word of God not

being bound despite his own circumstances (2:8-9).

The benefits of the Bible at work in the life of a believer are numerous. For

example, a pure life flows from having the word hidden in the heart (Psa. 119:9, 11); the

word of God acts as a lamp to the feet and a light for the path of the believer (Psa.

119:105); meditation on the word of God leads to success in faith-living (Jos. 1:8; Psa.

1:3); and a blessing is offered to those who will read and keep the words of Revelation

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[12] Peter Adam, *Hearing God's Words: Exploring Biblical Spirituality,* New Studies in Biblical Theology, ed. D. A. Carson, no.16 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 109.

[13] In reference to 2Tim.3:16 Peter Adam states, "While current theological debate about Scripture concentrates on its authority, inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy, the New Testament has a different agenda. Its most important claim about Scripture (in this case the Old Testament) is that it is effective." Peter Adam, *Speaking God's Words: A Practical Theology of Expository Preaching* (Downers Grove, Ill.:InterVarsity, 1996), 89, in Michael J. Quicke, *360-Degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Living the Word* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 53.

(Rev. 1:3). It is clear that when the Word of God enters a believer and results in appropriate action, that believer grows; they are blessed (cf. James 1:25). To know God and to grow in godliness, an intimate knowledge of God's Word is truly indispensable.

Spirituality is not limited to Bible study in the life of the believer. There is a place and need for awareness of creation, prayer, the Lord's Supper, fellowship, suffering, etc. Nevertheless, the role of the Bible is central and critical, even in providing perspective and discernment in the response to these other resources.

<u>In History</u>

Throughout the history of the church, the role of the Bible in the life of the believer has been variously emphasized. Two millennia of church history have provided a challenging epoch during which the place of the Bible has been challenged by such foes as church tradition as an alternative authority, illiteracy as the barrier to Bible study among the uneducated common folk, and false teaching through spurious further revelation from cults and false religions alike.

The early church devoted itself to the teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42), a devotion which continued beyond the time of the New Testament record. During the patristic era one can read of comments such as by Gregory of Nazianzus, "Even the smallest lines in Scripture are due to the minute care of the Holy Spirit, so that we must pay careful attention to every slightest shade of meaning."[14] Similarly Iranaeus affirmed

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[14] Orat.2, 105. Quoted in Pache, 233-234.

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the role of the Bible in stating, "By our Lord Jesus Christ . . . give to every reader of this book to know thee . . . and to be strengthened in thee."[15]

While the Middle Ages were not bereft of advocates for the importance of Scripture, it was the Protestant Reformation that again shone a light on the significance and sufficiency of the Bible. For Martin Luther, "To hear or to read the Scriptures is nothing else than to hear God."[16] John Calvin urged his reader to:

> Read Demosthenes or Cicero, read Plato, Aristotle, or any other of that class: you will, I admit, feel wonderfully allured, pleased, moved, enchanted; but turn from them to the reading of the Sacred Volume, and whether you will or not, it will so affect you, so pierce your heart, so work its way into your very marrow, that, in comparison of the impression so produced, that of orators and philosophers will almost disappear; making it manifest that in the Sacred Volume there is a truth divine, a something which makes it immeasurably superior to all the gifts and graces attainable by man.[17]

Numerous confessions could be cited to affirm the unique place and authority of the Bible, all affirming unanimously *Scriptura sola – Scriptura tota* (Scripture alone and all of Scripture).

If the Reformation rediscovered "the Bible as the definitive, authoritative and sufficient source of true spirituality",[18] then the pietistic and puritan movements that followed only intensified this. The Bible was the medicine administered both from the pulpit and in person by puritan ministers, the "physicians of the soul." German Pietists pioneered Bible study in small fellowship groups. Adam quotes the Pietist, Philip Spener, "Thought should be given to a more extensive use of the Word of God among us

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[15] Against Heresies. III. Chap.6, quoted in Pache, 235.

[16] Cited in M. Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1944), p17.

[17] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1559 edition, 2 vols., trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962)*,* 1.8.1.

[18] Adam, 23

. . . The more the Word of God is among us, the more we shall bring about faith and its fruits. . . It would not be difficult for every housefather to keep a Bible . . . and read from it every day."[19]

<u>In Contemporary Christianity</u>

The printing press was critical in the dissemination of the Protestant Reformation.[20] Recent years have likewise seen incredibly significant advances in technology that provide unprecedented opportunity for the Word of God to be accessed by most believers. Transportation allows easy movement of people or resources. Media advances come with increasing speed, allowing for numerous low-cost means of transferring biblical material and teaching. Computer technology has only compounded the frequency of new Bible translations. This generation has resources and ability to access those resources beyond anything known throughout church history. The reality, however, is not as positive as one might expect.

Biblical illiteracy is on the rise among evangelicals.[21] Joseph Stowell has referred to "the dumbing of the church."[22] Michael Quicke notes that churches are

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[19] Spener, in Erb, 1983:31-33, quoted in Adam, 23. It would be false to suggest that all puritans and pietists gave a central place to the Bible in their spirituality and ministry. Geoffrey Nuttall notes that some believed so strongly in the direct input of the Holy Spirit that even the Bible became a secondary intermediary help. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), 83-85.

[20] It is fair to note that for the first fifteen centuries of the church, personal Bible reading was not an option for the vast majority of followers of Christ. Cf. Malcolm Tolbert, "Does One Have to be a Bible Scholar to Interpret the Bible?" *Faith and Mission* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 23.

[21] Walter Kaiser noted back in 1973 an "alarming increase in Biblical ignorance." Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 13.

[22] Joseph M.Stowell, *Shepherding the Church Into the 21st Century* (Wheaton: Victor, 1994), 21, cited in Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 32.

suffering from one-dimensional engagement with Scripture: either just with the head or just with the heart. As a result, "The two edged sword becomes a plastic butter knife."[23] The dawning of postmodernity is bringing an increasingly subjective pursuit of spirituality. A combination of western individualized culture with a postmodern yearning for authentic spirituality in community is leading many into a Christian life experience that is strong on the experiential, vulnerability, and community, but weak on biblical teaching.

The need of believers today, as it has been throughout history, is that the central resource for Christian spirituality not be neglected. The Bible has a significant role to play in the lives of Christians. Believers need to be in the Word, and they need to be in it well. That is to say, the Bible is not a magical incantation that works its wonders irrespective of how it is handled. Rather, to quote Gordon Fee, "true spirituality demands that we do our exegesis as carefully as our skills and opportunities make it possible. Since everyone who reads the text also interprets as one reads, the question is not whether one will do exegesis or not – everyone will and does – but whether one will do *good* exegesis or not."[24] Sadly in many cases, the question is whether a believer will even read the text or not. Since the Bible has such a crucial role to play in the life of the believer, the desperate need of our day is to motivate believers to be in the Word, and to help them be in the Word with an adequate hermeneutic under girding their appropriation of the Word of God to them.

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[23] John Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching* (London: SCM, 1985), 164, quoted in Quicke, 360-Degree Preaching, 38.

[24] Emphasis original. Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text*, 15.

The Role of the Church in the "Biblical Spirituality" of the Believer

The Nature of the Church

The word "church" is translated from the Greek designation ἐκκλησία. The non-technical meaning is simply "assembly," as seen in secular Greek, the Septuagint and occasionally in Acts (7:38; 19:32, 39, 41). The other 109 uses of the term in the New Testament carry a more technical meaning as the Christian people of God physically gathered locally (e.g. 1Th. 1:1; 1Cor. 4:17), or universally referring to the spiritual unity of all believers in Christ (e.g. Acts 8:1-3; Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18).[25]

The church is described using various images in the New Testament. It is seen as constituting "the people of God" who have been elected, called together as saints for His possession (1Pet. 2:9-10; Titus 2:14; 1Cor. 1:2). The church is the body of Christ, of which He is head (Col. 1:18; 1Cor. 12:12-31; Eph. 1:22-23), with a sense of unity in the midst of diversity, each part needing the other. The church is the temple of God built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20-21; 1Cor. 3:10-11), using the living stones of those given life by the living stone (1Pet. 2:5; cf. Jn. 5:26), to be the dwelling of God (2Cor. 6:16). At the same time the church is the priesthood serving God (1Pet. 2:5,9; Heb. 13:10, 15-16). The church is the bride of Christ with the initiating self-sacrificing love of the bridegroom and the responsive respectful absolute devotion of the bride (Eph. 5:22-32; cf. Rom. 5:8; 1Jn. 4:19), all lived in anticipation of the future return of the groom to establish the forever union of the relationship (Jn. 14:1-3; 2Cor. 11:2). The church is the flock of the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:1-19) and the branches of the vine (Jn. 15:1-17).

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[25] Robert L. Saucy, *The Church in God's Program* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 15-18.

In each of the images used for the church there is some sense of a community of believers in some form of relationship with God, Father or Son. The believers are a community brought together and yet still growing spiritually – either in present unity and fruitfulness or in purity in anticipation of future union.

<u>The Maturation of All</u>

The church is a community of believers brought together in Christ that is to be characterized by spiritual growth (Eph. 4:11-16).[26] The images used for the church in the New Testament do not imply past inclusion without a present expectation of growth.

The people of God are called out to be His possession, zealous for good works and in need of rebuke and exhortation (Titus 2:14-15). They are the elect that are being conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29-30). They are those called to be saints, but still having their sanctification worked out (1Cor. 1:2; cf. 1Cor. 1:3ff). The body of Christ is made up of individuals that were baptized into Christ by His Spirit (1Cor. 12:13), and sovereignly given gifts by that same Spirit for the continual benefit of others, building up the body (1Cor. 12:7, 11; 14:5, 12, 17). The temple of God is growing, it is being built together (Eph. 2:21-22), the living stones are being built as a spiritual house (1Pet. 2:5). The priesthood needs to be urged to live honorably (1Pet. 2:9-12), the presentation of their own bodies as sacrifices being an ongoing requirement (Rom. 12:1), the sacrifices of praise are to be continual, while those of doing good and sharing can potentially be neglected (Heb. 13:15-16). The bride of Christ is to respond to His love with submission and increasing purity in anticipation of His coming (Eph.

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[26] Stanley J.Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994), 645.

5:22-24; 1Jn. 3:3). The flock need to listen to the voice of their Shepherd (Jn. 10:16)

and the branches must abide in the vine (Jn. 15:4-10).

Since the church is a community of believers set apart for spiritual growth, it is

critical that the Word of God have a significant place within the church. "We start out

from the fact that the church is where the *Bible* is opened. Here God has spoken."[27] For

believers to mature, for the church to grow toward its goal and purpose, the Bible must

not be neglected.[28]

<u>The Need of All Believers</u>

All believers, in community, have need of the Word of God. The people of God

are sanctified by the truth of God's Word (Jn. 17:17). The body of Christ is built up by

believers using their spiritual gift, including the gift of teaching (1Cor. 12:7, 28-29; Eph.

4:12). Christ washes the bride with the water of the Word (Eph. 5:26-27). Every

section in the New Testament relating to the growth of the church is presented in the

broader context of teaching that is needed by the church today.

The Bible has a critical role to play in the life of each individual believer, but in

reality each individual believer is a part of the community of the church. In that

community the Bible must have a place of significance if growth is to occur. The

specific means of biblical input in a church setting can be diverse – study groups,

conversational use, liturgical reading, classroom teaching, in song, and of course,

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[27] Karl Barth, *Homiletics,* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Donald E. Daniels (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 62.

[28] In light of Calvin's emphasis on preaching or teaching, Ronald J. Allen concludes, "Who are we? Communities that teach, learn, and witness to the gospel." He goes on to add, "The church thus has a profound need for reinvigoration of teaching and learning. The pastor is a primary figure in this recovery." Ronald J. Allen, *The Teaching Sermon* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 16, 19.

through preaching. The importance of the community must not be understated. The Bible has been given to the church, and it is in the context of community that it is to be studied and applied (as in the example of the Bereans, Acts 17:11). While allowing for an exegetical expert who works hard in preparing a message, Fee goes on to insist that the testing of that study must be done in community. "For the true heirs of the Philippians, who first received this text, are not the scholars who have objectified the text and made it their own, but the community of believers who are committed to listening to God and walking in His ways."[29]

The Role of Preaching in Motivating and Modeling Bible Study

The Nature of Preaching

The preacher's task is to bring the Bible into the lives of the congregation. Consequently, the preacher is to be a practitioner of hermeneutics and of communication. The preacher is to use good hermeneutics to understand the Bible, and then apply that understanding through effective communication to the listeners. William Sanford LaSor stated that, "the art of preaching is the application of Scripture to the present situation. . . For the preacher who believes that the Bible is the authoritative word of God in every generation, his task is to start with the text of Scripture and to derive from it a message that will be in effect the word of God to his audience."[30]

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[29] Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text*, 15.

[30] William Sanford LaSor, "The *Sensus Plenior* and Biblical Interpretation," in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation: Essays Presented to Everett F. Harrison,* eds. W. Ward Gasque and William Sanford LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 261.

Haddon Robinson's definition of expository preaching is instructive in its clarity and additional elements:

> Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.[31]

The hermeneutical phase of sermon preparation ("derived from") is to be a "historical, grammatical, and literary study" of a particular passage in its own context. The proclamation phase ("and transmitted through") also should reflect the hermeneutical elements of "historical, grammatical and literary study." The communication of that biblical concept is not mere transmission of information. Rather it involves personal application by the Spirit of God, in the life of the preacher, and then through the preacher to others. This definition implies the biblical spirituality presented in this project.

John Stott acknowledges the biblical metaphors of a preacher as a herald, a sower, an ambassador, a steward, a shepherd, and a workman. He notes that each image presents the preacher as one under the authority of another, one who communicates the word of another.[32] Stott agrees that preaching is not mere exposition (that is to say, exegesis only), but also communication to a contemporary situation. With these two worlds in view, he adds his own metaphor for preaching,

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[31] Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages,* 2nd ed (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980, 2001), 21.

[32] John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 135-137.

that of the bridge-builder.[33] The preacher is to build a bridge between the world of

the Scriptures and the world of the listener, and necessarily in that order, for the

"type of bridge to be built must be determined more by the biblical revelation than

by the *zeitgeist* or spirit of the age."[34]

The Importance of Preaching

While it is wrong to suggest that preaching is the only way the Bible enters into

the lives of believers in the church program, it is also a mistake to miss the preeminent

and unique place of preaching in church life.[35]

Paul presented the church as a body in 1 Corinthians 12:4ff emphasizing the

diversity of gifts given by the Holy Spirit. Each believer is given at least one gift under

the sovereignty of the Spirit (1Cor. 12:11) for the purpose of benefiting others (12:7)

and building up the church (14:5, 12, 17). He recognized that there would be those in

the church who felt unimportant (12:14-19) as well as those who would think too highly

of themselves and see others as unnecessary (12:20-26). There is clearly a need for

unity in the midst of such diversity, which requires recognition that all members of the

body need the other members, even if their ministry is less prominent. In discussing

preaching it is possible to fall into a similar error to that of the Corinthians and look

down on other aspects of ministry. In humility the preacher must esteem other

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 139.

[35] "No one who takes the Scriptures seriously, however, dares to count preaching out. . . .
Preaching and teaching, of course, are not the only means by which God builds His people, but they are
His major means." Haddon Robinson, "What is Expository Preaching?" in *Making a Difference in
Preaching,* ed. Scott M. Gibson (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1999), 62, 66.

ministries and recognize the mutual interdependence of all believers on the ministry of all other believers.

Nonetheless, the preaching ministry does hold a unique place in the life of the church. Paul later instructed Timothy to consider certain elders "worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching" (1Tim. 5:17). Preaching, especially expository preaching, is unique in its presentation of the power of the Word of God.[36] The Word has the power to mature not only the preacher, but the congregation as well.[37]

Expository preaching is unique in its presentation of the authority of the Word. Since the Scriptures alone have divine authority, it follows that preaching the Scriptures is to be a ministry conveying a unique authority.[38] Varying styles of homiletical delivery may convey differing levels of implied authority, but true exposition of Scripture has an innate authority irrespective of style of delivery, for it is the communication of the word of God (cf. 1Th. 2:13).

Expository preaching is unique in its presentation of the work of the Spirit. The hearts of God's people are changed by "The Holy Spirit working by and with the Word in our hearts."[39] Preaching is to be a ministry saturated with dependence on the work of the Spirit – the text studied is the text He inspired; the preparation and delivery of the message are to be pursued in humble prayer for the Spirit's help; the congregation are

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[36] Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 30-33.

[37] Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 36-37.

[38] Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 14.

[39] Westminster Confession of Faith, 1.5.

indwelt by the same Spirit (in the case of believers), they are to test the message against

the text inspired by the Spirit, and ideally, they are mutually prepared through prayer, or

at least prepared by the prayers of the preacher, with these prayers being answered by

the work of the Spirit in their lives.

Robinson notes that for Paul the writer, there remained something uniquely

powerful about preaching. "Even the reading of an inspired letter will not substitute. 'I

am eager to preach the gospel to you . . . who are in Rome' (Rom. 1:15 RSV). A power

comes through the preached word that even the written word cannot replace."[40] Thus in

his final climactic charge to Timothy, Paul's instruction was simple, "Preach the Word!"

(2Tim. 4:2).

<u>The Example of Preaching</u>

Preaching is concerned with hermeneutics applied through communication in

order to bring the message of the Bible to bear in the lives of the contemporary listener.

Preaching is a ministry that is unique and in some respects pre-eminent in the life of the

church. Nevertheless, a further aspect of the preaching task is worthy of consideration.

Preaching sets an example to believers. Specifically, the preacher has influence not only

through the specific purpose of each message,[41] but more generally through the

opportunity to motivate believers to be in the Scriptures for themselves and the

opportunity to model effective hermeneutics so that when they are in the Scriptures, they

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[40] Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* 19. For D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, preaching was the primary task of the church, "the highest and greatest and most glorious calling." D.Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), 9, 25.

[41] This is assuming that every sermon preached has a defined purpose. Robinson teaches the preacher to ask, "Why am I preaching this sermon?" yet also recognizes that only in theory do all preachers have a clear purpose. Robinson, "Homiletics and Hermeneutics," in Gibson, ed. *Making a Differing in Preaching*, 76.

will handle them rightly (2Tim. 2:15).[42] According to Duane Litfin, "by the time the speech is finished, the audience has had a direct experience with Scripture."[43] Has that experience been an effective exposure to good hermeneutics? As Jesus said, ". . . everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40b) – does the preacher want their listeners to be like them in how they handle Scripture?[44]

Alistair Begg notes the importance of the example of the preacher in handling the text of Scripture. "By our preaching we either help or hinder our people in the task of interpreting Scripture."[45] He uses the example of a university professor teaching anatomy, "We would not expect [him] to teach from a textbook . . . by picking out parts of sentences at random and using them for his lecture."[46] Vines and Shaddix refer to Paige Patterson's description of expository preaching as "helping people read the Bible better."[47]

Through effective expository preaching, the preacher is able to both model and motivate good Bible study habits in their congregation. Effective pedagogy requires firstly instruction, then modeling, followed by participation (telling, showing, and

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[42] "Sermons implicitly teach theological method. Preachers model their theological method on the way they think through . . . a biblical text. Simply by listening, members pick up cues on useful (or trivial) questions, lines of approach, modes of research, hermeneutical movements." In the context of a teaching sermon he goes on to state, "Fine teachers help their students internalize both the content of the subject matter and useful methodologies, to continue their education into the subject and apply it to life outside the classroom." Allen, *The Teaching Sermon,* 33-34, 50.

[43] Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking: A Handbook for Christians*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 339.

[44] "Every Sunday ministers claiming high regard for the Scriptures preach on texts whose ideas they either do not understand or have not bothered to study." Haddon Robinson, "Homiletics and Hermeneutics," in Gibson, ed., *Making a Difference in Preaching,* 71.

[45] Alistair Begg, *Preaching for God's Glory* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1999), 35.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Vines & Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit,* 31.

doing).[48] When instruction and modeling are effectively in place, then motivation will

follow for participation, in this case, for personal Bible study. Proper motivation is

critical if true teaching is to take place.[49] Vines and Shaddix recognize "appetite

development" as one benefit of expository preaching, in that a steady diet will lead to

listeners who desire to get into the Bible for themselves – Bereans who go home and

search the Scriptures and thereby continue to grow spiritually.[50]

A Call for Change in Light of the Influence of Preaching on Bible Study Habits

This project has demonstrated the critical need of each individual believer to be

feeding themselves from God's Word. It has shown that the church has a fundamental

role in the spirituality of its members. It has made clear the importance of preaching in

the church for both the motivation of, and learned skill in, personal Bible study among

individual believers. So let this call be clear: may preachers give greater attention to

their influence on the Bible study habits of their listeners, both in respect to their desire

to spend personal time in the Bible and in respect to their skills to do so effectively! The

preacher does well to seek to motivate personal Bible study and model effective Bible

study through preaching. The concern of the preacher for their listeners must go beyond

communicating the specific message of the text at hand (although never neglecting that

task), to also be concerned that the listener has both the "want to" and the "way to"

study the Scriptures outside of the preaching setting.

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[48] Howard Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987), 145-146.

[49] Ibid., 139.

[50] Ibid., 36

This thesis-project is not about critique of weakness alone, but also the strengthening of what is already effective in good expository preaching practice. This is not just a call for expository preaching. Even a good expositor may be inadvertently failing to model and motivate good Bible study skills in certain aspects of his preaching.

Stott's metaphor for preaching, bridge-building, is usually presented with the movement being unidirectional. Actually, the metaphor is not unique to Stott. For instance, Thomas Long wrote in reference to Jean-Jacques Von Allmen's 1962 illustration of preaching, "He lined a heavy arrow from Bible to Congregation."[51] Long also noted that Von Allmen did not draw any arrow in the other direction, "Not even a faint one." The motivation was legitimate, for "he wanted to insure that the agenda for preaching was set by the Bible and not by people's perceived needs, real or illusory."[52] For Long, the truth obscured by this simplistic illustration is that "those who hear the gospel are not passive receivers of information, they are active participants in the gospel story."[53]

For this project, another truth must be emphasized, the listener in the pew is not just a passive receiver of information, but is, in fact, designed to be active in personal study of the Bible. Thus there are two arrows, or to use Stott's metaphor, two lanes on the bridge. First, the preacher brings across the message from the Scriptures. Subsequently the listeners need to then go back across that bridge and study the Scriptures for themselves. The preacher must recognize the influence of that preaching

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[51] Thomas G. Long, "The Distance We Have Traveled: Changing Trends in Preaching," in *A Reader on Preaching,* ed. David Day, Jeff Astley, and Leslie J. Francis (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2005), 14.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

on both the motivation to cross the bridge, and the skills needed once that listener is in personal Bible study. This thesis-project will seek to help preachers build better bridges for effective traffic flow in both directions.[54]

Returning to Long's analysis of the changes in preaching, he concludes, "The sermon, then, becomes not an essay, a lawyer's brief, a debater's rebuttal, or a piece of religious rhetoric; it becomes a journey . . . a journey which the preacher has taken once in the study and now guides for the congregation."[55] While it may be true that during the sermon the preacher is a guide through a re-created adventure in the Scriptures, how much more it is true that the listeners should go on to explore the text personally, even without the guide present. So in the shared experience of the sermon the guide must motivate the listeners to journey again into the sacred text, and the guide must also model how they should explore that text without this human guide leading the way. To motivate and to model personal Bible study, two aspects of preaching that are not automatically present, but are so critical as to make the necessary effort infinitely worthwhile.

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[54] Quicke rightly notes that the bridge illustration is inadequate to describe what happens in effective preaching, when "several factors positively combine: Scripture, words (combined with images), God (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), the person of the preacher, the listener, and the worship context. All these aspects belong and work together as the Trinitarian God empowers the preacher's word and the hearers' responses." While agreeing with Quicke in reference to the complexity of the preaching event, this thesis-project is focused on one aspect of the preaching event and is thus served by the relative simplicity of the "inadequate" bridge-building model. Even in Quicke's complex and multidimensional model of preaching, there is a two-way flow between "preacher & hearers" and "Scripture." Quicke, *360-Degree Preaching*, 48, 51. (In fact, the bridge-building model is not so dissimilar to his model as Quicke suggests once the bridge-building model is defined in terms of God's Word being brought with God's purpose to God's people by God's messenger – while the Trinitarian element is still unclear, the divine beginning and end is evident in such a 180-degree model.)

[55] Ibid., 16. According to Allen, "The Christian teacher is a helper or guide in the learning process." Allen, *The Teaching Sermon,* 27.

Conclusion

The Believer in the Bible (What to Model)

Having established the need for believers to be in the Bible and the role a preacher has in that process, it is now appropriate to present the hermeneutical process for the preacher to model. At a certain level this is a relatively simple evangelical hermeneutic (historical, grammatical and literary, with a focus on authorial intent). Nevertheless, this thesis-project asserts that the hermeneutical process of the preacher is in fact the same hermeneutical process that the listener should learn through the modeling of the preacher. There is not one hermeneutic for the preacher and another one for the listener (for example expository as opposed to devotional), just as there is not more need for the Bible in one believer's life than there is in another's.

While recognizing that hermeneutics is a vast field of study with apparently infinite scope for complexity, this model is deliberately simplified. A good preacher will need more hermeneutical skill than is presented here in order to accurately handle the Scriptures, but they will certainly not need less than this. Likewise, a believer has opportunity and need to go beyond the basic model presented here, but they will be unnecessarily hindered with anything less than this being modeled to them.

The Bible Study Bridge (What to model)[56]

Stage 1:
Study a legitimate unit of Scripture to determine the author's central idea, by contextual analysis of both content and intent.

Stage 2:
Seek to legitimately apply the idea to personal and communal context for transformed affection, belief and conduct.

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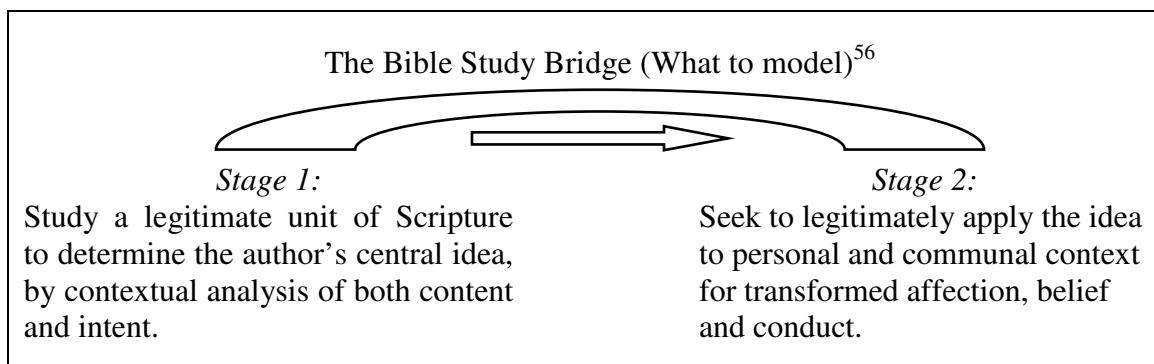
[56] Detailed explanation of the Bible Study Bridge is given in chapter 4.

In light of the attempt to draw together the hermeneutical process of the preacher and the listener, this hermeneutical model could be entitled, "A Big Idea Hermeneutic." This title would be drawing on Haddon Robinson's label for his model of message preparation, the model under which this writer has been educated.[57]

The hermeneutical model advocated for both preacher and non-preacher is rooted in the convictions presented at the start of this chapter concerning the importance of the Bible in the life of the believer. These convictions point to the attitude that must precede the action of Bible study. They are the ground in which the procedure of Bible study are planted. These basic convictions will be listed here as that which needs to be motivated through preaching.

<u>The Bible in the Life of the Believer (What to Motivate)</u>

1. The source of the Bible is God.

To use the well-known words of Augustine, "When the Bible speaks, God speaks."[58] At the core of Christianity is the understanding that, "God is first and foremost a communicative agent, one who relates to humankind through words and the

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[57] Cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* 33-50. Robert Allen distinguishes an expository hermeneutic (method of Bible study) from an expository form of preaching. His presentation of expository form is unnecessarily rigid, emphasizing linear and deductive sermon form. However, the distinction between Bible study methodology and homiletics is helpful. He notes that the message is God's, while the form is cultural. Robert Allen, "The Expository Sermon – Cultural or Biblical?" *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 212-230. John Stott also clarifies that the term exposition refers to the content of a sermon, rather than the style, thereby allowing for a notion of expositional Bible study. Stott, *Between Two Worlds,* 125.

[58] Fee continues the thought, "God speaks and we listen. Thus our concern in coming to the text is to hear from God. No other stance is exegetically in keeping with the text itself." Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text,* 14.

Word."[59] Without this fundamental conviction that the Bible is the Word of God, an individual will lack necessary motivation for applying a healthy hermeneutic to their Bible study. As Paul stated, "All scripture is God-breathed" (2Tim. 3:16).

2. The goal of the Bible goes far beyond the imparting of knowledge.

The Bible, by its very nature, is revelational. It is the special revelation of God. Why does God choose to reveal anything of Himself? Donald Coggan rightly states, "If we ask: 'Why is the Christian's God a God who speaks?' the answer must be: 'He speaks *because he loves.*'"[60] So if the goal of the Bible is revelational, then it is relational; and if relational, then also transformational. If God reveals because He loves, and He desires relationship with His people, consequently the goal of the Bible is the continual amelioration of that relationship through the transformation of His people. The Apostle Paul continues his statement concerning the Bible by emphasizing not only what the Bible is, but what it does, for it is, "Useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2Tim. 3:16). Yet the reality is that we live in a time when there is "a loss of confidence in God's power to use His Word"[61] not only among preachers, but among believers in general.

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[59] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 456.

[60] Donald Coggan, *A New Day for Preaching* (London: SPCK, 1997), 89, italics original.

[61] Steven J. Lawson, Famine in the Land: A Passionate Call for Expository Preaching (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 57.

3. The integrity of the Bible is absolute.

"All of Scripture is God-breathed," so the believer should esteem highly all the books of the canon, both the Old Testament books that Paul was referring to, and the New Testament books that were later accepted by the church at large.

4. The Bible is for all.

The Bible is not a God-given revelation for the benefit of His people, with the exception of certain individuals or groups. The Bible is not for some kind of ruling elite, or a priestly class of Christians. The Bible is for all believers to access personally by whatever means are available to them.

5. The study of the Bible is a spiritual-relational process.

Since studying the Bible is more than an intellectual exercise, since it is a means by which God and His people relate, it follows that Bible study must be a spiritual process. As a believer prayerfully engages with the text of Scripture, the Holy Spirit is involved, along with other sources of dialogue such as preachers, books, other believers and so on.[62]

6. The Bible is fundamentally important in the life of any believer.

The Apostle Paul continues his thought to Timothy, "so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2Tim. 3:17) For a believer to be

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[62] Tolbert, in reference to an individual's Bible study, states, "A person needs to read the Bible with one eye on the community." Tolbert, "Does One Need to be a Bible Scholar," 31. Fee agrees that, "our exegesis, therefore, must be kept in in the context of the believing community." Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text*, 15.

thoroughly equipped, they must receive from the Bible. The extent of an individual's

Christlikeness, their spiritual maturity, and their equipping for ministry, is directly

proportional to the extent of their transformation by the Word of God.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis-project is a cross-discipline study of homiletics and hermeneutics, with some study in the fields of communication, education and motivation as they relate to this specific project. The core fields for this study are homiletics and hermeneutics, so these sections will take the form of a review of the respective fields. The final section relating to communication, education and motivation literature will summarize insights that are particularly relevant to this thesis-project, rather than surveying the entire respective fields.

There is a continual flow of new books on the subject of preaching. Those that support an expositional approach (a term confusingly used of methodology in Bible study, the source of the sermon material, and the form of delivery) to preaching will usually make brief comments on why Expository Preaching is to be preferred to alternatives. In passing, some books may refer to the example that expository preaching gives to the listener in respect to handling the text. However, the specific issue of how a preacher may or may not motivate and model good Bible study habits in and for the listener appears to be a missing link in the field.

Since there are no works directly addressing the subject of this thesis-project, it is necessary to combine the strengths of other works from the various fields in order to support the study of this particular subject. This literature review will consider three

broad fields of literature, focusing specifically on those works that have significant value

for this project. The three fields are homiletics, hermeneutics, and

communication/education/motivation.

The Field of Homiletics

The concept of a hermeneutic that is essentially the same for listener as for

preacher, built around the concept of the author's idea in a passage, is influenced very

strongly by Haddon Robinson. His text on developing and delivering expository

messages, *Biblical Preaching*, makes clear the fundamental nature of communication

being by means of ideas. How ideas are formed, how they are developed, and their key

role in the process of preaching, are some of the significant contributions to the field

made by Robinson. His concept of "Big Idea" preaching is essentially a combination of

classic communications theory with a strong conservative view of expository preaching.

In effect, there is a whole sub-category of preaching literature that could be named the

Robinson school.

If the Robinson school of thought were to be formally recognized, there would be

several key books included. There are other works by Robinson, including those with

contributions from him such as *Mastering Contemporary Preaching*, and the extensive

collection of articles co-edited with Craig Brian Larson, *The Art and Craft of Biblical

Preaching*. Robinson's thought in *Biblical Preaching* is supported by Scott Gibson's

Making a Difference in Preaching, along with the work co-edited by Keith Willhite, *The

Big Idea of Biblical Preaching.* Gibson has also edited *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*,

which seeks to expand on the issues related to biblical preaching that remains

contemporary as culture morphs significantly. Along a similar line is Graham Johnston's *Preaching to a Postmodern World*, again affirming the Robinson focus on the biblical text and the use of idea, yet engaging with the ever-changing context of the recipients.

Strongly influenced by Robinson are three works that prove especially valuable for one seeking to understand his teaching. One is Duane Litfin's *Public Speaking: A Handbook for Christians.* Litfin makes overt the communication theories underlying Robinson's work, but essentially conveys the same methodology when it comes to discerning the idea, developing it, shaping the message and so on. Litfin's expanded treatment of idea discernment is particularly helpful as a supplement to *Biblical Preaching.* Another valuable work is Steven Matthewson's *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative.* This book explains and demonstrates what is essentially Robinson's methodology, but focusing specifically on the sometimes troublesome genre of Old Testament Narrative literature. Matthewson's work is valuable not only for the preacher, but for anyone seeking to discern the contemporary significance of this genre. The third is Donald Sunukjian's *An Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth With Clarity and Relevance.* Sunukjian adds to Robinson's instruction through his own emphasis on oral clarity and described relevance, but essentially presents the Robinson approach with numerous examples throughout.

Robinson's work in the field of homiletics continues to be immensely significant. In effect, he stands between two groups of thinkers in the field. On the one side, there are those who might be considered more liberal in their view of the Bible, yet have had significant influence on homiletics in respect to the organic nature of the sermon and the importance of the sermon as an experience for the listener. On the other side, there are

the conservative writers in respect to their view of the Bible, writing in the field of homiletics. Robinson is certainly a conservative and so is by no means separated from this group, but at the same time it is the other group that are noteworthy influences on the Big Idea approach to preaching. Both groups are considered in turn.

H. Grady Davis wrote *Design for Preaching* in 1958, an important influence on what has become known as the New Homiletic. This work broke new ground by viewing the sermon not as a skeleton to be constructed, but as an organic entity that grows (Davis used the illustration of a tree). Fred Craddock took this approach and taught a form of inductive preaching which allowed the listener to share in the process of discovery along with the preacher. Craddock's works include *As One Without Authority* and *Preaching.* Writers like Craddock and especially Davis have influenced Robinson's approach to Expository Preaching (not prescribing specific form). Consequently, for Robinson, expository preaching is defined by the role of biblical study and biblical sermon content, rather than any prescription of sermonic form. Other prominent New Homiletic writers would include David Buttrick and Eugene Lowry. For Buttrick the sermon develops in the consciousness of the listener through clever use of moves and structures, as explained in his important work, *Homiletic.* For Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot* allows a sermon to be an event in time rather than a static proposition. The influence of such writers pushes for sermons to be experienced and not just heard, thereby potentially creating a sense of excitement at the dynamic reality of personal Bible study.

Two festschrifts in honor of Craddock and Buttrick offer some articles of note in this field of organic/narrative/inductive preaching. O'Day and Long's edited *Listening to the Word: Studies in Honor of Fred B. Craddock,* and Farley and Long's edited

Preaching as a Theological Task: World, Gospel, Scripture in Honor of David Buttrick,

both bring further clarity and reflection on the influence of these two writers.

As editor of both, Thomas Long is clearly also a contemporary writer worth noting in this

category of homiletical writing, especially *The Witness of Preaching*. Day, Astley and

Francis have edited *Making Connections: A Reader on Preaching*, which contains two

helpful articles by Long.

      The goal of increasing a sense of participation in a sermon through induction is

also developed by Lewis and Lewis' *Inductive Preaching*. They make an effective and

direct appeal for more induction in preaching, including a useful guide to change

traditional sermon structures into inductive sermons. Both Wesley Allen, Jr. (*The*

Homiletic of All Believers: A Conversational Approach to Proclamation and Preaching),

and Ronald Allen (*Preaching: An Essential Guide* and *The Teaching Sermon*) advocate

for forms of conversational preaching, approaches that allow helpful insights into the

complex reality of a message and its interaction with an audience.

      While Robinson has a foot in this experiential and creative camp of homiletics

writers, his theological position would be with those recognized as conservative

evangelicals. Naturally, there is a massive amount of literature relating to preaching

coming from the conservative evangelical camp.

      Well-known preachers tend to write books on preaching, presenting their own

theology of preaching and approach. John Piper's *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* is

a great example of this. His theology and view of God add significance and strength to a

work that does not propound to be a detailed text on homiletical process. In a similar

vein, the brief work by Alistair Begg entitled *Preaching for God's Glory* sounds a powerful call for authoritative expositional preaching.

More detail on the process of expository study and sermon preparation are offered by John MacArthur in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*. The book reflects MacArthur's own style of verse-by-verse preaching, with a serious tone throughout and no space for dramatic or creative communication. The earlier work of Walter Liefeld on *New Testament Exposition: From Text to Sermon* again offers detail on the process of expository study of the biblical text. As a technical manual, this is another strong work, yet perhaps lacking the vitality of a Robinson or Matthewson.

The earlier work of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers,* remains worthy of note in the field. The book presents preaching as the greatest and highest calling, with typical Lloyd-Jones strength. After dealing at length with the theology of the preaching event (chapters 1-8), he then addresses the specifics (chapters 9-16), sometimes focusing on apparent minutiae (such as preacher's dress, length of sermon and so on). This is an important work, yet in part the benefits of experience are tempered by the failings of old age, especially in those parts where the presentation is more dogmatic than relevant.

The Reformed tradition places great value on the pulpit and so it is no surprise to find many works on preaching in this camp. For example, Samuel T. Logan Jr.'s collection of essays from men like J.I. Packer, J.M. Boice, R.C. Sproul and Sinclair Ferguson, entitled *Preaching: The Preacher and Preaching in the Twentieth Century.* This work covers various aspects of the preaching task with an overriding call to strengthen the Reformed pulpit. Chapters worthy of note include Logan's on

"Phenomenology and Preaching" wherein he demonstrates the need for analytical and intuitive communication balance for homiletical efficacy. Ferguson's chapter on exegesis effectively seeks to combine the exegetical and the homiletical process. In addition, Krabbendam's essay on hermeneutics is worthy of note. Throughout the book there is a sometimes off-putting pride in Westminster Seminary and the Reformed tradition, still this book contains chapters that make a significant contribution to the field.

In recent years another group of works has come from an essentially Reformed background. With greater emphasis on biblical theology than the traditional systematic emphasis, these works have a specific contribution for the field of homiletics and the hermeneutics involved. With a strong desire to preach Christ and avoid the mere moralization of biblical texts, Edmund Clowney's work, as typified by the more recent *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture,* gave rise to the many preaching texts taking a historical-redemptive approach to preaching. Graeme Goldsworthy's works, including *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching*, follow on from Clowney and are typical of this approach. The "biblical theology" espoused is the strongly Reformed approach that emphasizes the unity of the canon around the person and gospel of Christ, which at times fails to recognize the importance of progressive revelation or the discontinuities of Scripture. In order to avoid moralizing every biblical text into an exhortation for the listener, this approach traces the theme of the sermon through to its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. This strongly Christocentric approach leads to grand and sweeping sermons that sometimes lack in the area of application. On a slightly more technical level, Sidney Greidanus adds detail to the hermeneutical aspects of sermon preparation in the

comprehensive and thorough *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*. Like

Goldsworthy, Greidanus has the emphasis on preaching Christ in all textual settings, with

the hermeneutical methodology to support the premise, in *Preaching Christ from the Old

Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method.* In the same approach stands Bryan

Chapell's work, *Christ-Centered Preaching.* Chapell's work is less exhaustive than

Greidanus' on the hermeneutical aspects of homiletics, but makes up for it with a very

comprehensive guide to the sermon preparation and delivery. A very helpful concept is

his "fallen-condition focus" in seeking the contemporary relevance of a text. Chappell

follows Clowney's approach, the historical- redemptive, but modifies it by adding

contemporary application as a distinct and final step in the preaching process.

Books by homiletics specialists are also numerous. Paul Scott Wilson's

Preaching and Homiletical Theory is a technical work that addresses the realm of

homiletics as a discipline, rather than just addressing preachers as they prepare. Calvin

Miller's *Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition* makes a strong contribution in terms

of entering into the narrative of a text to strengthen the preaching event. The

combination of preaching professor and pastor has produced Vines and Shaddix's *Power

in the Pulpit,* a very detailed presentation of the development and delivery of expository

messages.

One of the most significant works in preaching has come from a theologian-

pastor, rather than a homiletics professor. John Stott's *Between Two Worlds* has every

right to be called a classic. This work focuses on the nature of preaching and presents

Stott's own metaphor for the preacher as a bridge-builder. The focus of the book is on

the process of preparation rather than delivery, elocution and gesture (p9). The bridge metaphor has been respectfully adapted in this project.

Recently, Michael Quicke's *360-Degree Preaching* made a helpful contribution in recognizing the limitations of a two-step approach (such as Stott, or this thesis-project) and the complexity described by Quicke must be acknowledged by the more simplified preaching models. Where Stott's one-way bridge becomes a two-lane bridge in this project, it becomes a complex soup in Quicke! While the emphasis in this thesis-project is on a personal biblical spirituality, Quicke is focused on the power of God at work in the preaching event.

Other works worth mentioning are more specific in nature, such as Al Fasol's work focused on oratorical principles of vocal and physical delivery, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery,* or Graham Jacks' helpful works *Just Say the Word: Writing for the Ear* and *Getting the Word Across.* Also strong in the area of delivery is Wayne McDill's *The Moment of Truth.*

There are two significant obstacles to modeling and motivating good Bible study habits through preaching. Before moving on to the field of hermeneutics, these two obstacles will be addressed since they relate to this consideration of the homiletics field. First, the example of hermeneutics in contemporary preaching is often flawed. This is partially related to the non-expository or poor-expository preaching that prevails today. Second, today there is a limited expectation that preaching will motivate Bible study in the listeners. This obstacle is closely related to the concept of a clergy-laity divide.

The Problem: Non-Expository or Poor-Expository Preaching

John Stott's metaphor of preaching as bridge-building allows him to describe the

failure of preachers on both sides of a theological divide. In reference to "liberal"

preachers, Stott writes that often their preaching is earthed in today's world, but the

source of the message is undefined. "They certainly do not appear to come out of the

Bible. On the contrary, these preachers have allowed the biblical revelation to slip

through their fingers."[63] Robinson recognizes that all preachers are faced with the

temptation to deliver a message that is not that of the Bible, resulting in a message that

lacks divine authority, for "God is not in it."[64] Other models of preaching, such as non-

expositional topical sermons, may substitute for biblical preaching, but it is expository

preaching that "best carries the force of divine authority."[65]

A non-expository message, that is a message sourced other than in solid biblical

exegesis applied through the preacher to the listener, will consistently and necessarily

give a very poor model of how to handle the Scripture. Indeed, in most cases the

preacher would not even attempt to model sound hermeneutics if his approach to

preaching were non-expository. On the other hand, many who claim to preach

expository sermons do not help listeners either. As Robinson states, "expository

preaching has suffered severely in the pulpits of those claiming to be its friends."[66]

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[63] Stott, *Between Two Worlds,* 143.

[64] Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* 20.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 21.

Alongside non-expository messages, also poor-expository messages are an obstacle to the modeling of good Bible study skills.

Stott's model shows the symmetrical error of the traditionally "conservative" preacher who tends to build from the world of the Bible directly upwards, without ever grounding the message in the contemporary world.[67] This style of preaching is wholly lacking in application and is thereby only poor-expository at best, although in reality it falls short of both Stott's bridge-building metaphor and Robinson's stated definition of expository preaching.

Vines and Shaddix helpfully list six dangers in regard to exposition that is poorly done. These are dullness, irrelevancy, monotony, Spiritlessness (the idea that the Holy Spirit is not involved in the process), formlessness (the notion that all Bible study involves is collection of information from commentaries), and detail overload (the idea that Bible study is about a fanaticism for minutiae).[68] Although all six dangers represent obstacles to both motivation for Bible study and modeling of Bible study skills, the first three certainly do harm to any motivational agenda on the part of the preacher. The latter three represent bad practice (even if the practice is only perceived by the listener) in regards to the Bible study skills used by a preacher in preparing a sermon, and consequently, to the Bible study skills that will be copied by the listeners in their own personal practice.

D.A. Carson perceives the reality of poorly handled Scripture when he states, "We are dealing with God's thoughts: we are obligated to take the greatest pains to understand them truly and to explain them clearly. It is all the more shocking, therefore,

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[67] Stott, *Between Two Worlds,* 140.

[68] Vines & Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit,* 37-40.

to find in the evangelical pulpit, where the Scriptures are officially revered, frequent and inexcusable sloppiness in handling them."[69]

The Result: Deficient Bible Study Skills Are Modeled

The results of non-expository preaching, or poor-expository preaching, are manifold. The actual preaching lacks the authority and power of true exposition of God's Word for the listeners. Some form of "spiritual junk food" may satisfy the audience, or they may be untouched by unapplied exegesis. Yet there is another critical result from such preaching; deficient Bible study skills are modeled.[70]

The listener learns from the example set before them. "The pastor's exegesis and interpretation of a biblical text teaches the congregation how to engage a text."[71] They may be looking to learn from the preacher (someone perceived to be spiritual, mature, biblically trained, etc.), or they may be inadvertently learning from the example set before them. Either way, the listener will not be impervious to the example set before them week after week. According to Robinson's definition of expository preaching, the biblical concept is to be "derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context . . . which the Holy Spirit . . . applies."[72] By poor example, the believer may learn to study the Bible in a non-historical,

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[69] Carson, D.A. *Exegetical Fallacies* 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 15-16. Derek Tidball laments the current situation, "The way many preachers use the Bible is particularly worrying and their hermeneutic is a far cry from anything taught in seminary." Derek Tidball, "The Current State of Preaching: A View From Britain," *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 6, no. 2 (September 2006): 35.

[70] "Far from doing good, sermons can seriously damage a congregation's health, functioning as 'deskilling agents' that stunt the growth of listeners." Quicke, *360-Degree Preaching,* 36.

[71] Allen, *The Teaching Sermon*, 50.

[72] Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* 21.

ungrammatical, literary-irrelevant, context-less manner. Furthermore, they may learn

that the concept of a passage is not important in Bible study and that it is possible to

study the Bible without application, or that it is possible to make application without

having effectively studied the Bible. [73]

The Reality: Preaching Models Bible Study Skills

Whether or not the preacher is seeking to model Bible study skills is irrelevant.

Preaching models Bible study skills. The preacher either helps or hinders the listener in

the task of interpreting Scripture.[74] Even with the change in culture that has seen

preaching devalued and the preacher losing respect,[75] it is still the case that the preacher

holds a unique position of influence when it comes to Bible study skills. The preacher

stands before the congregation for a potentially extended period of time each week as

the one who is supposed to bring a message from God's Word to the people (irrespective

of how much they respect the role of the preacher or the tradition). When the preacher

repeatedly models specific inadequate approaches to the Bible, who is there with the

opportunity to redress the balance and correct those approaches with anywhere near the

same weekly exposure and influence? In most cases there is no person able to correct

bad example. The preacher stands in a uniquely influential position.

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[73] Wright states that "the ultimate issue for any Bible reader is not 'what will you do with the Bible?' but 'what will you let the Bible do with you?'" While recognizing the importance of application, it would be dangerous to assume that the latter question can be answered without first addressing the former, that is to say, life change occurs as application is derived from sound Bible study (what you do with the Bible). Stephen Wright, "The Use of the Bible," in *A Preacher's Companion: Essays from the College of Preachers, ed. Geoffrey Hunter, Gethin Thomas, and Stephen Wright* (Oxford: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2004), 89.

[74] Begg, *Preaching for God's Glory,* 35.

[75] Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* 17-18.

The Solution: Model Better Bible Study through Expository Preaching

Since the preacher's position of influence is unique and since sound expository preaching is seen to be the best model of handling the Bible before a congregation, it follows that preachers need to seek to model better Bible study skills through expository preaching. A non-expository preacher who holds a strong liberal theological position will probably not have any desire to model Bible study to their congregation. Nevertheless, across the spectrum of evangelical Christendom, to one degree or another, preachers do desire to see their congregations growing spiritually through effective personal Bible study.[76]   Ronald J. Allen recognizes the importance of deliberate modeling of hermeneutics:

> The sermon implicitly models patterns of engaging a text exegetically and hermeneutically; the sermon's value as a model of encounter with a biblical passage will increase as the preacher thinks conscientiously about how it can so function in the congregation.[77]

Due to the desire to see the listener growing spiritually through effective personal Bible study; it is incumbent on preachers to model effective hermeneutics as well as possible through expository preaching on a consistent basis.

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[76] Ronald Allen is right when he states, "Preaching cannot bear sole responsibility in the Christian community for helping the community learn the content of the Bible or how to interpret it." Yet the opportunity should not be ignored, he continues, "But sermons can help the congregation learn essential aspects of the content of the Bible and its interpretation." Allen suggests, "from time to time, sermons can focus on issues and methods in biblical interpretation itself." This paper goes further than a periodic practical lesson in interpretation approach, affirming rather that all Biblical preaching can be tailored to model, and thereby teach, effective biblical interpretation. Ronald J. Allen, "Why Preach from Passages in the Bible?" in *Preaching As a Theological Task: World, Gospel, Scripture in Honor of David Buttrick,* ed. Thomas G. Long and Edward Farley (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1996), 180.

[77] Ibid., 183.

The Problem: Clergy/Laity Division

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to preachers motivating their congregations to personal Bible study is the lack of expectation. It is very difficult to motivate people to do something you don't expect them to do. One of the greatest single factors in this obstacle is the supposed division between believers who are among the clergy and those who are "just" laity. While this is not the place for an extended discussion of church polity and denominational practice, the concept of clergy-laity must be briefly addressed.

Throughout her history, the church has been at the same time one people and yet two. Called together out of all diversity into a unity, the church is nonetheless frequently divided by the concepts of clericalism and laity. While there are denominations that have sought to avoid this two-category Christianity,[78] for the most part the distinction has endured. Clericalism can be defined as "the domination of the 'ordinary' people by those ordained, trained and invested with privilege and power."[79] One of the consequences of clericalism is some element of "disdain for the laity as unreliable, incompetent and unavailable."[80]

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[78] For example the Plymouth Brethren have sought to avoid the pitfalls of clericalism through a position of anticlericalism that at times rejects notions of gifting and training to open up the pulpit to all the men. While recognizing the dangers of clericalism, this writer also sees the dangers of anticlericalism when Biblical concepts such as spiritual gifting and development of gift through mentoring and training are neglected. Sadly, Paul Stevens' reference to this phenomena each Sunday as "the world's greatest amateur hour" is sometimes an accurate summation of the result. R. Paul Stevens, *The Abolition of the Laity* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999), 52.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

Biblically there is both a sense of anticlericalism, (for example in Paul's

comment to the Corinthians dividing over leaders, "What then is Apollos?" 1Cor. 3:5),

and at the same time a respect for the divinely appointed leadership structure of the

church. That structure includes the apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherd-

teachers listed in the gift list of Ephesians 4:11, as well as the offices of elder and

deacon seen in 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1:5-9. The leadership of the church is to be

honored (1Tim. 5:17-19) and obeyed (Heb. 13:17).

While accepting the biblical and practical reality of vocational ministry in its

various guises, it is important to avoid the danger of clerical thinking. For example, if

clergy are people of the cloth, paid to be in the Book and doing the work of the ministry,

while the laity are people of the "real world" who are recipients of said ministry, then

numerous problematic separations result: Bible study and application, spirituality and

real life, ministers and those ministered unto, and so on. In reality each of these

separations is biblically inappropriate. True Bible study includes real life application.

Spirituality is to be lived out in every walk of life. All are ministers. All are recipients

of ministry. Some are in a position of leadership and perhaps greater influence (Eph.

4:11), but as servants these people are to minister in order to "equip the saints for the

work of ministry" (Eph. 4:12).[81]

In presenting the lack of clergy/laity distinction in the New Testament record,

John Stott writes,

> What clericalism always does, by concentrating power and privilege in the hands
> of the clergy, is at least to obscure and at worse to annul the essential oneness of
> the people of God . . . where Christ has made out of two one, the clerical mind

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[81] Fee explains the lack of concern to further explain church polity in the New Testament
documents as due to: ". . . their sense of corporate life as the people of God, among whom the leaders
themselves did not consider themselves 'ordained' to lead the people, but 'gifted' to do so as one gift
among others." Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text,* 143.

makes two again, the one higher and the other lower, the one active and the other passive, the one really important because vital to the life of the church, the other not vital and therefore less important. I do not hesitate to say that to interpret the church in terms of a privileged clerical caste or hierarchical structure is to destroy the New Testament doctrine of the church.[82]

A further element to note in this artificial division of God's people is a distinction between the church (where spirituality is experienced) and the academy (where 'cold' exegesis takes place). According to Fee, "the church is – for good reason – highly suspicious of the scholar or the seminary-trained pastor, who seems forever to be telling people that the text does not mean what it seems plainly to say."[83] Again it is a false dichotomy that leads to one group of Christians being perceived as "spiritual" while weak on exegesis and another group being "exegetical" but lacking in spirituality. In reality true exegesis is spiritual and spirituality is tied to good exegesis.[84]

The Result: Low Expectation from Preachers, With Consequentially Low Motivation

The supposed division between clergy and laity potentially negates expectation on the part of the preacher regarding the personal Bible study of the listener. While they should, as believers, have something of a personal devotional life, that can be perceived as quite distinct from the ministry-driven devotion and study that the preacher

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[82] John R. W. Stott, *One People* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), 19-20. Alexander Strauch agrees, "Clericalism does not represent biblical, apostolic Christianity." Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership,* revised and expanded (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1995), 113. Also O. Wesley Allen Jr. states, "As the body of Christ in which all have spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12) and in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (Gal. 3:28), the distinction between laity on the one hand and clergy and academicians on the other must be removed when it comes to the task of *doing* theology and proclaiming the faith." O. Wesley Allen Jr., *The Homiletic of All Believers: A Conversational Approach to Proclamation and Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 20.

[83] Fee, Listening to the Spirit in the Text, 8

[84] Ibid.

experiences. Why would a preacher seek to motivate in others the same devotion to Bible study that they need for good expository preaching if those others are functioning as a different category of Christian? If the recipients are merely passive, then their personal devotional life is very different than the active ministry of the preacher.

The Reality: The Priesthood of All Believers

In the New Testament the people of God are presented as being truly one. There is no distinction between clergy and laity. All believers, ὁ λαὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (the people of God – note laos from which "laity" is derived) are in fact ministers. As members of Christ, every believer shares equally in the privilege of ministry. None are to be called "Rabbi" or master, for only Christ is the Master (Mat. 23:8-10). All saints together constitute "a royal priesthood" (1Pet. 2:9) and are made "priests to God" (Rev. 5:10) by Christ (Rev. 1:6). Every metaphor used for the church implies that the ministry of Christ fuses together with the ministry of the church as a whole (body members, vine branches, and so on.). Every member of the body of Christ is given at least one spiritual gift designed to benefit the other members of the body (1Cor. 12:7; cf. 14:5, 12, 17).[85] The members of the church all have a biblical ministry in each others' lives, for "individual spirituality flourishes best when corporate spirituality is in good condition, and this happens when 'the word of Christ' dwells richly among us."[86]

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[85] Saucy, *The Church in God's Program,* 127-129.

[86] Adam, *Hearing God's Words,* 97.

The Solution: Motivate Better Bible Study in the Priesthood

It is dangerous to have too high a view of oneself as the preacher, or too low a view of the congregation as mere laity.[87] In reality all are priests, all are ministers, all are gifted and needed for the church to be built up. In reality the shepherd of the flock does not feed them, but rather leads them to "good grazing pasture where they may feed themselves."[88]

Once the preacher recognizes that all are ministers and that the role of the "pastor-teacher" is to equip the people for their ministry functions (Eph. 4:11-12), then a greater expectation will exist in the preacher. The listeners need not only to listen to this message, but they also need to be in the Word of God themselves, for it is by the Word of God that each is competent and equipped for every good work (2Tim. 3:16-17).

The clergy/laity mindset is an obstacle. It hinders the preacher from seeking to motivate the listener to be in the Scriptures for themselves with the same urgency that the preacher hopefully senses for his/her ministry. Recognizing this distinction among the one people of God as unbiblical, the preacher is free to recognize the full extent of the need of the people to be in the Word of God for themselves and consequently to seek to motivate it.

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[87] There is already a significant proportion of believers who feel "totally inadequate when it comes to reading . . . understanding . . . the Bible." Tolbert, "Does One Have to be a Bible Scholar," 30.

[88] Stott, *Between Two Worlds,* 177.

The Field of Hermeneutics

<u>Instructional</u>

A preacher must be concerned with right interpretation methodology; it is a requisite for the role. This project has argued that all believers, including non-preachers, should be concerned to be in the Bible on a personal level and to interpret it appropriately. Therefore, a survey of works in the field of hermeneutics can be of use to all believers, whatever their level of preparation. However, it is important to read at an appropriate level since the more technical works can easily be overwhelming for one who is not prepared for the quantity and depth of content offered by some.

At a basic beginner level, there are several general introductions to the subject of hermeneutics and Bible study methods that are worth noting. William and Howard Hendricks' engaging work *Living by the Book* is a very accessible guide to the inductive study process. The forerunner of this work would be Robert Traina's *Methodical Bible Study*, a very significant work, but potentially unnecessary in light of recent works. On a more general introductory level, Fee and Stuart's *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* is a helpful introduction to the Bible and to the study of the Bible, introducing the notion of genre specific studies. This popular work is let down in part by the somewhat dogmatic treatment of certain debatable issues like translation philosophies and certain passages. As a beginner level introduction to hermeneutics, Roy Zuck's *Basic Bible Interpretation* is helpful. Again there is a slight narrowness in parts, such as the strict approach to typology, but overall a very helpful work.

There is increasing awareness of genre as a key factor in biblical interpretation. Ray Lubeck's *Read the Bible for a Change* is a detailed introduction to the subject of

Bible study. Lubeck was mentored by John Sailhamer and so consequently the role of genre, form and style are noted throughout. There is particular strength in the area of narrative interpretation. Matthewson's work, already noted above, *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative*, is worthy of note in this section on hermeneutical works since the book is so helpful in the process of interpreting this genre. It is a great example of how the hermeneutical process for preaching can be the same as the process for personal Bible study. Matthewson relies significantly on Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, a very significant work in the field. Long's brief work on *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* offers a helpful introduction to each of the main biblical genre. Jeffrey Arthur's preaching text *Preaching With Variety: How to Re-create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres* is similar to Long, but stronger in respect to handling the various genre (as well as suggestions on preaching them). Another detailed approach, Mike Graves' work, *The Sermon as Symphony: Preaching the Literary Forms of the New Testament*, has much to commend it. On interpreting the Old Testament genres, Walter Kaiser's books, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* and *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching* are worth consideration.

On a slightly more advanced level, Gordon Fee's *New Testament Exegesis* again focuses on Bible study in preparation for preaching, but is aimed more specifically at seminary-trained expositors. It is helpful even without knowledge of the languages, but is slightly less accessible than the previously mentioned works. D.A. Carson's *Exegetical Fallacies* is a significant work of correction for many of the errors commonly practiced and even taught from the pulpits of our churches. As a supplement to more general hermeneutical works it is invaluable.

The subject of spirituality has experienced something of a revival in recent years. With the specific focus on spirituality by means of Bible reading and study, two works stand out. As a more advanced work, Peter Adam's *Hearing God's Words: Exploring Biblical Spirituality*, is a somewhat eclectic work combining a survey of biblical data, before focusing on Calvin's perspective and some modern approaches to meditation. On a more accessible level, Ronald Frost's helpful paperback, *Discover the Power of the Bible: How God's Word Can Change Your Life*, is a motivating call to high frequency Bible "read-throughs" in mutually stimulating relationships with other believers.

Specifically concerned with combining exegesis and spirituality, two other books are particularly worthy of note. Fee's *Listening to the Spirit in the Text* is a helpful integration of spirituality with exegesis, calling for the two to be reunited. The initial chapters on exegetical process are very helpful and accessible. The rest of the book deals with specific texts, perhaps of value as examples of his dual concern. Eugene Peterson's *Eat This Book: The Art of Spiritual Reading* is also worthy of note in respect to combining exegesis with spirituality.

<div align="center">Theoretical</div>

As the works become more technical, so they step over from primarily instructional (related to the instruction for practice of Bible study) to theoretical (incorporating, but going beyond instruction to theoretical discussions of relevant topics). The foundational issue of the nature of the Bible itself is addressed in all systematic theologies, as well as in specific works like Rene Pache's *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*.

Specifically concerning the theory of hermeneutics, there is a variety of works available. Accessible works would include Scot McKnight's edited *Introducing New Testament Interpretation*, as well as the rest of the series dealing with New Testament interpretation from Baker. Standard texts on hermeneutics combine elements of instruction with discussions of theory, such as Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard's *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* or the classic *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* by Ramm from a generation ago. Similar, but with an added twist, is Walter Kaiser and Moises Silva's *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*. The twist is that this seminary level text provides interesting dialogue within the text as the co-authors disagree on issues throughout.

One technical work of particular interest is the cross-discipline text from Turner and Cotterell, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation.* Their specific awareness of the role of analyzing communication in Bible study is helpful.

With a greater emphasis on critical levels of exegetical theory, Black and Dockery's edited work, *Interpreting the New Testament*, or Porter's edited volume, *A Handbook to the Exegesis of the New Testament*, both provide helpful engagements with the various critical disciplines, as well as considerations of specific New Testament writers and study in their respective works. Within these volumes, discussions of discourse analysis are technical but well worth consideration in light of the emphasis on flow of thought and textual context. Kaiser's older *Toward an Exegetical Theology* addresses many of the issues of these other volumes, but integrates more toward an actual exegetical process that informs not only theology but preaching as well.

Recent works that survey both cultural shifts outside the church and within Christian academia, as well as addressing the specific challenges to the field of hermeneutics include Robert Thomas and Kevin Vanhoozer. Two writers with different concerns, yet both affirm the importance of authorial intent as a fundamental element in biblical hermeneutics. Thomas' *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New Versus the Old* addresses the challenges introduced by reader-response methodologies and highlights their pervasive influence, even within conservative evangelicalism. Vanhoozer's *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* is a substantial engagement of the hermeneutical and epistemological challenges of postmodernity informed by aspects of Speech-Act Theory as well as Trinitarian theology.

The Fields of Communication, Education and Motivation Theory

Each of these three areas of literature represents vast fields of academic study. For the purpose of this thesis-project, a relatively small sampling will aid in supporting the project in chapter four.

The field of communication theory has obvious relevance to the broader field of homiletics. In reference to this thesis-project, the following aspects of communication theory are particularly helpful.

To use the terminology of Speech Act Theory,[89] this project will highlight perlocutionary elements in preaching that relate to the Bible study habits and motivations of the audience. In a possible oversimplification, three levels of communication can be noted in any spoken or written work: locution, illocution, and perlocution. Locution

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[89] For instance, J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975). Also the exposition and development of Austin's first edition: John R. Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

refers to the actual words used. Illocution recognizes that locutions are used with specific

intent; there is an illocutionary force in any communication (perhaps informing,

commanding, or warning). Perlocution goes beyond the illocutionary force of a speech

by means of the speaker's possible intent as they seek to elicit "consequential effects" in

the listener.[90] So if the illocutionary force of a speech reflects the stance of the speaker

toward the listener, then the perlocutions relate to the effects of what is spoken, "both

planned and unexpected effects."[91] This project intends to reduce the number of

unexpected effects that negatively influence the Bible study habits of those listening to a

sermon.

While most simple communication models, as well as homiletics models, assume

that a speaker has a single, hopefully defined goal in any message communicated, this

does not appear consistent with experience. Indeed, the theory of constuctivism

recognizes that "cognitively complex people" are better equipped to craft a message "to

accomplish multiple goals at the same time."[92] It is worth noting that the burden rests

with the speaker, rather than the listener, to effectively achieve multiple goals. Although

the theory focuses primarily on interpersonal communication, the concept would apply in

monologue presentations. Thus, in preaching, it is possible to speak with more than one

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[90] "A perlocutionary act goes beyond the illocutionary act based on the speaker's possible intention or design of eliciting consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience. These intentions include the acts of persuading, convincing, and deterring." Blue further describes Vanhoozer's position by his equating of a speech act with "meaningful action." The similarities conclude with, "Finally, actions have both planned and unexpected effects. These effects correspond to the perlocutions of utterances." Scott A. Blue, "Meaning, Intention, And Application: Speech Act Theory In The Hermeneutics Of Francis Watson And Kevin J. Vanhoozer," *Trinity Journal* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2002), 163, 168.

[91] Ibid., 168.

[92] See Em Griffin, "Constructivism of Jesse Delia," in *A First Look at Communication Theory* 5th ed (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 119.

goal in the process. The modeling and motivating of better Bible study habits will usually not be the primary goal in preaching a sermon, but they can be deliberate and present goals in the preaching of any sermon.

Constructivism as a theory also offers a warning that may be worth noting in this project. Multiple goal communication is apparently restricted to those with "rhetorical design logic." If some communicators have a different "design logic," namely "conventional" or "expressive," teaching a multiple goal approach may be confusing or unhelpful to them. While recognizing that preachers will have a different capacity to adapt their preaching to this approach, this thesis-project will take the position that it should be taught to all who preach. Some preachers will have the capability to embrace the positive elements of this project very effectively, while others may benefit primarily from reducing the negative elements (demotivating sermon elements or modeling of unhealthy Bible study approaches) in their preaching.[93]

Another communications theory that should be considered is the Social Judgment Theory of Muzafer and Carolyn Sherif. This theory is concerned with attitude change. At its core it holds that a person's attitude change on a specific issue will result from judgments on related issues. It is important, when seeking to change the attitude of another, to use language and presentation that fits within their "latitude of commitment." This has two implications. Firstly, any terminology that is unknown or obscure will fall into the person's "latitude of non-commitment" and therefore not help in attitude change. Secondly, language and presentation should fit the evangelical convictions of the listener

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[93] Ibid.

rather than being perceived as "non-evangelical" and therefore in the "latitude of rejection."[94]

Many evangelical Christians may be open to instruction on how to handle the Bible, but lack the experience or training necessary to be aware of the importance of context, or a similar issue. If the speaker uses terminology such as "discourse analysis" or "rhetorical criticism," the listener may reject the instruction as being non-evangelical. On the other hand, a presentation that speaks in terms such as, "God inspired Paul to write this flow of thought, so the context is critical to understanding the verse," may help attitude change toward the importance of context in Bible study.

Another implication of the Social Judgment Theory is that persuasion occurs in a series of small movements rather than through a single speech. Therefore, rather than relying on one sermon per year focused on personal Bible study, it is more effective to teach and model it consistently as a secondary but intentional goal. Joseph Ilardo supports the notion that the repetition of concepts is more effective than sporadic intense training. In repetition, the elements of a concept are given allowing for small and gradual change. This particularization allows for effective learning. He also notes that imitation of experts is a significant way to learn something. However, actual performance in a skill is vital to learning.[95] This would suggest the benefit of periodic interactive sermons, or follow-up outside of the preaching context.

The educational field has obvious relevance to this thesis in light of the desire to have preachers instruct and influence listeners through preaching. John Milton Gregory's classic, *The Seven Laws of Teaching,* directly and indirectly supports this thesis at several

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[94] Ibid., 186.

[95] Joseph Ilardo, *Speaking Persuasively* (London: MacMillan, 1981), 40-43.

points. What Gregory says of teachers would be true of listeners, "The true worker's love for his work grows with his ability to do it well."[96] Indeed, the preacher would do well to, "Excite and direct the self-activities of the student."[97] How many preachers break the law of language when preaching and hinder learning on various levels, including the desire to study the Bible personally? Gregory writes, "Use the simplest and the fewest words that will express your meaning . . . it may be a single unusual or misunderstood term that breaks the connection."[98]

Howard Hendricks took his lead from Gregory in writing *Teaching to Change Lives* or *The Seven Laws of the Teacher*. Hendricks is a great advocate for expressing confidence in learners. "You can't break a student's habit of negative thinking overnight or with one compliment,"[99] is true interpersonally, and how much more from the pulpit. It takes repeated and continued effort to motivate listeners with the sense that they can be Bible students as well, especially if many sermons are de-motivating. Hendricks notes that "the number one problem among students is a lack of confidence."[100] What is true of seminary students is certainly true of Christians sitting in pews who need not only encouragement, but also equipping with the necessary skills for personal Bible study. Hendricks writes, "The average man avoids reading and studying the Bible primarily

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[96] John Milton Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching,* rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1884, 1956), 9.

[97] Ibid., 74.

[98] Ibid., 52, 54.

[99] Howard Hendricks, "Teaching that Motivates," in *Mastering Teaching*, Earl Palmer, Roberta Hestenes, Howard Hendricks (Portland: Multnomah, 1991), 76.

[100] Ibid., 78.

because he doesn't know how. He would like to know firsthand what God says, but he presumes the Bible is for the professionals, the pastors, the capable."[101]

The interdisciplinary study of motivation theory as it relates to education does offer significant insight for this thesis-project. Raymond J. Wlodkowski presents four characteristics and skills of a motivating instructor: they offer expertise, have empathy, show enthusiasm and demonstrate clarity. These categories can be directly applied to the preacher seeking to motivate the learning of Bible study skills through preaching. First, the preacher must offer expertise by knowing the hermeneutical process well and seeking to convey the necessary skills through preaching. Second, the preacher has empathy for the listeners by understanding their needs, their current abilities and their perspective on their own competence or incompetence. Third, the preacher should show enthusiasm for the Bible study skills that are at work in a sermon rather than just enthusiasm for the message in its final form (or worse, no enthusiasm at all). This enthusiasm is expressed using appropriate amounts of emotion, animation and energy. Fourth, the preacher demonstrates clarity in respect to the hermeneutical process by choosing clear language and organization of thought.[102]

In defining the influence of a teacher on students, or a preacher on listeners, it is vital to recognize the importance of modeling. Mager succinctly subtitles the chapter on modeling as, "People see, people do."[103] He then clarifies the importance of this concept

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[101] Ibid., 78-79.

[102] Raymond J. Wlodkowski, *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1985), 16-43.

[103] Mager, *Developing Attitude Toward Learning,* 69.

by noting, "most of what we learn is learned by imitation."[104] This implies that, "We must behave the way we want our students to behave."[105]

The fact that modeling may not be positive is also noted, "Modeling influences people mainly by *informing* them of a way of doing something. When something is demonstrated by a model, the observer is informed of a way in which that thing can be done. It may not be the right way or the desired way or the safe way, but the way shown is likely to be the way that is adopted."[106] Stephen Brookfield states, "The role modeling undertaken by teachers is the most important element in transformative teaching. What we do as teachers is invested with enormous symbolic significance by students."[107]

Motivation theories abound. Wlodkowski noted, "There are over twenty internationally recognized theories of motivation with many opposing points of view, differing experimental approaches, and continuing disagreement over proper terminology and problems of definition."[108]

One motivational theory that has proven helpful in the formulation of this thesis-project is the Competence Theory of R.W. White.[109] This theory highlights the inherent desire of humans to gain competence over their environment. Consequently, people find successful mastery of tasks to be intrinsically gratifying. The confidence that results

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[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid., 72.

[106] Ibid., 70.

[107] Stephen D. Brookfield, *The Skillful Teacher: On Technique, Trust, and Responsiveness in the Classroom* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990)*,172.*

[108] Wlodkowski, *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn*, 44

[109] R.W. White, "Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence," *Psychological Review*, 66, 1959: 297-333.

from competence in a skill then provides the emotional support to strive for a higher level of competence, thus forming a mutually supporting cycle of competence and confidence. During satisfying and effective learning experiences, the learner has feelings of competency generating internal statements such as, "I really understand this" or "I am doing this proficiently." Out of the internal statements of competency emanate statements of self-confidence, "I can do it" or "I will be able to do it again."[110]

The importance of the concept of competence is evident in the number of different psychological theories that include competence as a central assumption. For example, Wlodkowski recognizes competence as a central assumption in attribution theory, achievement motivation theory, personal causation theory, cognitive evaluation theory, and social learning theory.[111] This thesis-project is not primarily concerned with how new theories might integrate the notion of competence, but rather notes that the relationship between perceived competence and self-confidence is a key factor in motivation. The motivational model presented in the seminar will reflect this dual focus on perceived competence and self-confidence.

The motivational nature of competence is combined with other elements for a more complete understanding of how to motivate learners. For example, Stanford Ericksen combines White's theory with "the driving power of intellectual curiosity."[112] Ericksen's statement made in reference to college education could equally apply to preaching, "If learning in college has been intrinsically satisfying, if curiosity has been

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[110] Wlodkowski, *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn,* 54-56.

[111] Ibid., 55

[112] Stanford C. Ericksen, *Motivation for Learning* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), 70.

fostered, and if students can confirm the social utility of knowledge, it is likely that

questioning and searching will continue beyond the day of graduation. The ability to

start this learning chain-reaction is one of the defining characteristics of a good

teacher."[113] So if the preacher desires to teach and motivate listeners for the skill of

personal Bible study, it is important to make the learning experience intrinsically

satisfying, to foster curiosity and to make clear the utility of the skill in normal life. For

the purpose of this thesis-project, a preacher who started a "learning chain-reaction" in

this way would indeed be a good preacher.

In defining motivation, Robert Beck emphasizes the element of perceived utility,

but in terms of emotional attraction. "Our basic premise is that organisms *approach*

goals, or engage in activities that are expected to have *desirable outcomes*, and *avoid*

activities that are expected to have unpleasant or *aversive outcomes*."[114]

This notion of "aversive" is emphasized in Robert Mager's work, *Developing*

Attitudes Toward Learning.[115] Mager's consideration of sources of influence on a

person's tendency to approach or avoid specific subject matter or activity is particularly

helpful. He writes, "Exhortation is used more and accomplishes less than almost any

behavior-changing tool known to man."[116] So simply exhorting listeners to study the

Bible for themselves is not going to achieve much that is positive, in fact, if that

exhortation is perceived negatively, it will prove counter-productive. Mager notes three

elements in an effective motivational model of teaching. Applied to this thesis-project

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[113] Ibid., 78-79.

[114] Robert C. Beck, *Motivation: Theories and Principles* (London: Prentice-Hall, 1978), 25. Italics original.

[115] Robert F. Mager, *Developing Attitudes Toward Learning*, 55.

[116] Ibid., 41.

these three elements would be defined as follows. The conditions that exist while the

listener is in contact with Bible study skills during a sermon – are the conditions

pleasant? The consequences of that exposure to the subject – is the result of the exposure

to Bible study skills favorable? The modeling of the preacher – is the attitude toward the

utility of personal Bible study positive?[117]

Mager develops the notions of positives and aversives in motivation. As he

succinctly writes, "People learn to avoid the things they are hit with."[118] So if a preacher

is seeking to motivate a listener in regard to personal Bible study, it is important to avoid

any aversive conditions or consequences that could be associated with the subject while

preaching.

> "An *aversive condition or consequence* is any event that causes physical or
> mental discomfort. It is any event that causes a person to think less highly of
> himself or herself, that leads to a loss of self-respect or dignity, or that results in a
> strong anticipation of any of these. In general, any condition or consequence may
> be considered aversive if it causes a person to feel smaller."[119]

It is evident that a preacher, in order to motivate the listener to pursue personal Bible

study, must avoid anything that makes the listener feel incompetent – to feel smaller – in

the area of personal Bible study. This is not to suggest that the preacher suggest the

listener is competent in an area where they are not, this will only lead to aversive

experience later on. Rather, in any aspect of Bible study that the listener is capable of

utilizing, the preacher should build up the listener. Inasmuch as personal Bible study is

made up of achievable skills, the idea of personal Bible study as a whole should be taught

without aversive elements. For instance, a person may be capable of reading, recognizing

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[117] Ibid., 40.

[118] Ibid., 55.

[119] Ibid.

a unit of thought, seeking to understand the author's idea in context and applying that idea to their own context. Yet if that listener is given the impression that knowledge of original languages is necessary for competence in Bible study, that aversive will remove motivation from the listener.

Stephen Brookfield's book, *The Skillful Teacher*, offers helpful insights into the issue of resistance to learning. It is naïve to assume that simply teaching people something that will help them is enough. People resist learning because learning involves change, which is threatening. Brookfield suggests important factors that are involved in resistance to learning. If people have poor self-image as a learner, or in this case, as a Bible student, they will resist pursuing personal Bible study. The preacher must consider how to build the self-esteem of the listener in regard to the essential skills of personal Bible study. A lack of clarity in the teacher's instructions will increase resistance to learning, so the preacher must teach Bible study skills with clarity. If the learning opportunity has apparent irrelevance to their own interests and concerns, people will resist learning. "Many people . . . only want to do things they know they can do well,"[120] which again supports the importance of a preacher creating a sense of personal competence and the associated self-confidence.[121]

Brookfield's suggestions on overcoming resistance to learning are also helpful. It is important to consider whether any resistance shown by learners is justified. In the case of listeners to sermons, it is important to recognize that they may have never sensed any expectation to pursue anything beyond a subjective "devotional" approach to the Bible. Furthermore, the preaching they have sat under, perhaps for years, may have been a

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[120] Stephen D. Brookfield, *The Skillful Teacher, 152.*

[121] Ibid., 147-154.

constant stream of de-motivation for personal Bible study. It is important to know your

listeners, which is true for every aspect of effective preaching. It is helpful to explain

intentions clearly, thereby sensitizing the listeners to the intention in what is said while

preaching. Periodic justification of your intention in influencing the Bible study habits of

listeners also may serve to overcome resistance. The involvement of former resisters is

an intriguing possibility. The testimonies of people in the church who have found benefit

in improved personal Bible study could effectively support the preaching, or may provide

periodic illustrative material to help achieve the goal of motivating others. There is

credibility when "normal" people affirm the importance of personal Bible study. It is

clearly critical to create situations where listeners can succeed in elements of the process.

Encouraging peer learning could be an effective means of enabling conversation about

personal Bible study within the church context.[122]

Brookfield also offers helpful insight into building trust with listeners. It is

harmful to seek to build up the listener's self-confidence and perceived competence by

denying one's own experience, ability and credibility. The preacher will not motivate

listeners to personal Bible study by suggesting that their skill in handling the text matches

the preacher's if that is not the case – there is no advantage to denying the professional

and academic training, experience, and skills that are true of the preacher.

The study of motivation in the field of learning could yield numerous helpful

principles to apply to this thesis-project. However, endless lists of principles will achieve

less than a short list of memorable concepts. The essential elements of educational

motivation for this project are these. People learn attitude and behavior by imitation, so

the preacher should behave as they desire their listeners to behave and with the same

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[122] Brookfield, *The Skillful Teacher*, 154-162.

attitude.[123] People are more likely to do something that they feel competent to do than something they feel incompetent to do. People are more likely to do something they know by experience will be relevant to their experience than something they are not convinced will help them in normal life. Curiosity will motivate further learning activity if there is expectation of relevance in the further study and confident perception of necessary competence to pursue the further study.

      The preacher, as a communicator, has the opportunity to influence the attitudes and actions of their listener toward personal Bible study. As Mager states in reference to teachers:

> "We are far more concerned with influencing how students are able to perform *after* the course is over, *after* our influence is discontinued . . . but if this goal is worth achieving, it is a goal worth doing more about than just talking. If it is a goal of value, we must act to achieve it . . . the more important your subject of instruction, the more important it is that students be *willing to use* what you have taught them."[124]

The challenge emanating from this study of communication, education and motivation literature is clear. If the preacher believes that the listeners would benefit from a healthier approach and commitment to personal Bible study, then as a communicator, the preacher should pursue an intentional and effective strategy to exert influence in this area.

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[123] Mager, *Developing Attitude Toward Learning,* 72.

[124] Ibid., 8-9.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT: BUILDING BETTER BRIDGES SEMINAR

The project for this thesis-project is a concise seminar for preachers. This format

for training is appropriate for several reasons. A seminar that requires only a few hours

makes the material accessible to more people. A longer training course might allow for

in-depth training, but in reality few are able to commit the necessary time for a multiple-

meeting course. Furthermore, the need for the course is not as transparent as a more

general one, thereby reducing the willingness of participants to commit to a longer

course. A course on how to preach may appeal to many, but a specific course of this

nature may not appeal. One of the critical elements of the course is the explanation of the

need for it, but with a longer format this would need to be clarified before people would

commit.

One-time events, such as this seminar, can take advantage of the intense nature of

the format to leave a lasting impression. Enthusiasm generated within the group in one

event can leave a lasting positive impression, rather than having to resurrect enthusiasm

for later sessions of a multi-session course. A one-time event can allow for the

generation of a positive atmosphere, unhindered by concerns regarding missing

participants or waning motivation. If time allows, the seminar could be extended to allow

for extra participant interaction, for an extra practice session or for extending the third

session by means of video clips or audio clips. With the extension of session three, it

may be beneficial to split it into two sessions rather than allowing an extended one to lose

momentum. It is important, whatever length of seminar is used, to finish strongly and

leave a positive lasting impression. The danger of a one-time seminar is that the

motivation may not be integrated into practice, or reinforced in real life situations.

It is important to run an effective seminar, but also to provide a tool for use during

sermon preparation. Follow-up with participants will also allow the principles taught to

be reinforced beyond the immediate context of the seminar.

Design of the Seminar

The seminar is entitled, "Building Better Bridges – Influence the Bible Study

Habits of Your Listeners While You Preach!"

The syllabus for the seminar includes the following elements:

Seminar Outcome

The participant will be equipped to prepare and/or modify a sermon so that it positively

influences the personal Bible study habits of the listener.

Seminar Goals

At the end of the seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the preacher's opportunity and responsibility to model effective Bible study

habits and motivate personal Bible study while preaching

2. State the basic principle of modeling

3. Describe in simple terms the hermeneutic to model through preaching

4. State and explain the basic principles of motivation

5. Utilize the seminar tool in preparing a sermon

Seminar Objectives (Related to Goals)

1. Explain the preacher's opportunity and responsibility to model effective Bible study habits and motivate personal Bible study while preaching:

    A. Explain in your own words how the preacher models Bible study habits while preaching.

    B. Convince another of the importance of seeking to motivate personal Bible study while preaching.

2. State basic principle of modeling:

    A. Recite from memory the basic principle: "People see, people do."

    B. Explain the principle in your own words.

3. Describe in simple terms the hermeneutic to model through preaching:

    A. Using hand motons as well as given terminology, recite from memory the "Bible study bridge" in short form.

    B. Using the more detailed notes in the handout, in your own words explain the "Bible study bridge."

4. State and explain basic principles of motivation

    A. Recite from memory the first basic principle of motivation: "Build confidence in competence and emphasize the relevance."

    B. Explain the two parts of the basic principle of motivation in your own words.

5. Utilize the seminar tool in preparing a sermon

A. Given written example sermon sections and the "Building Better Bridges" seminar tool, circle de-motivators and suggest motivating alternatives for 3-4 of the following elements of a sermon.

    a. Introduction

    b. Reading the Biblical text

    c. Sermon structure

    d. Big idea

    e. Development of idea

    f. Illustration

    g. Conclusion

    h. Delivery

B. Given written example sermon sections and the "Building Better Bridges" seminar tool, circle missed opportunities to clearly model effective Bible study and suggest alternative wording for 3-4 of the sermon elements listed above in A.

Instructional Strategy

The seminar is divided into three sessions. The first session is primarily concerned with the first goal of establishing the importance of the subject for the participants. In effect this session creates the need for the second and third sessions. The second goal is also accomplished in this first session. The second goal is concerned with the basic principle of modeling: "People see, people do." The principle is short and

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memorable in nature. By introducing it early, it underlines the importance of the subject, thereby helping to achieve the first goal.

The second session focuses on what needs to be modeled in preaching if the listener is to have a healthy approach to personal Bible study. The main focus of this session is the "Bible study bridge" – the hermeneutical model developed in the excursus below. This hermeneutical model is intentionally designed to be the same for the preacher as for the listener, thereby removing the oft-assumed distinction between the approach to Bible study of a preacher and a non-preacher. This second session teaches the modeling principle for a second time, thus achieving the second goal, while prioritizing the third goal relating to the "Bible study bridge."

The third session of the seminar adds the principle of motivation, before practically interacting with the "Building Better Bridges Seminar Tool." The focus in this third session is therefore goals 4 and 5. The title and content for each session is given below, along with instructional strategies to achieve the specific objectives for each goal.

Session 1 – The Influence of a Bridge-Builder (30 minutes)

- The outcome of the seminar

- What is Preaching? Preaching as bridge-building.

- The Influence: The Bible

- Primary focus of influence – specific sermonic purpose

- Influence is not just the text, also the preacher

- Secondary influence – how wide is that bridge?

- Intro to modeling – basic principle

Goals achieved – 1 & 2

Instructional Strategy – Interactive lecture format, handout with blank spaces to fill in, power point visual presentation. Modeling principle reinforced by humorous examples (for example, the leader looks at the ceiling and the participants will follow the lead, or if the leader scratches their head, soon others will do the same, etc.) Modeling principle repeated, memorized, tested without notes and explained in pairs.

Session 2 – The Bible Study Bridge (30 minutes)

- The process for preacher
- The process for listener
- The principle of modeling revisited
- The problem of inconsistency

Goals achieved – 2 & 3

Instructional Strategy – Interactive lecture format, handout with blank spaces to fill in, powerpoint visual presentation. "Bible Study Bridge" taught visually with powerpoint, reviewed with hand motions, practiced, tested without notes and explained in pairs using handout. (Power point slides are included in appendix 2)

Session 3 – Building Better Bridges (60 minutes)

- The principle of modeling revisited
- The "Bible Study Bridge" reviewed
- The principle of motivation

- The Building Better Bridges Seminar Tool introduced

- The principles applied to the sermon:

  i. Introduction

  ii. Bible Reading

  iii. Sermon structure

  iv. Big Idea

  v. Developing the Idea

  vi. Illustration

  vii. Conclusion

  viii. Delivery

- Review of seminar

Goals achieved – 4 & 5

Instructional Strategy – Handouts (included in appendix 1) that correspond to powerpoint

visual presentation. Basic principles of modeling and motivation reviewed with dynamic

of group recitation and individual practice. The sermon sections will be considered in

light of the Building Better Bridges Seminar Tool – a tool to serve the preacher during

sermon preparation. The tool will be used by participants as they practice on written

paragraphs from example sermons. Final review will use visual imagery, verbal and

hand motion repetition to reinforce the concepts covered.

<u>**Excursus: The Bible Study Bridge Detailed**</u>

<u>Stage 1: Study a legitimate unit of Scripture to determine the author's central idea,</u>

<u>by contextual analysis of both content and intent.</u>

"Study a legitimate unit of Scripture"

The biblical canon is a collection of books. With limited exceptions in the

collection of wisdom literature, the books of the Bible all have their own sense of unity,

progress, and order.[125] While the Bibles that we use today are divided into chapters and

verses, and often into sections within chapters, it is important to recognize that each book

is designed to be read as a book rather than as an anthology. Since it is often impractical

to read, study or preach an entire book at once, an individual passage from within a book

is generally taken as the focus text. Such a text needs to be a legitimate literary unit. The

definition of a literary unit depends on the genre of the literature being studied.[126] So, for

example, in an epistle, the literary unit is typically the paragraph; in a gospel, the literary

unit would be the discourse or the narrative; while in an Old Testament prophet, the unit

would be the oracle, and so on. A legitimate literary unit should be the focus of study,

with continual awareness of its context in the larger section and in the book as a whole.

". . . to determine the central idea" (not random or ancillary thoughts, facts, or subjects)

Gordon Fee writes that one of two main goals of the preacher in the exegetical

task is, "To learn as much as you can about your text, *its overall point,* and how all the

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[125] The obvious exception to this would be apparent collections of material such as Psalms and Proverbs, although in both cases there are scholars who support the idea of definite order within the books.

[126] The importance of genre cannot be underestimated. While this project is seeking to present a simplified hermeneutic, it in no way negates the importance of understanding critical features like a text's genre. The genre or form of a text have a critical bearing on understanding the author's idea and the author's purpose. Gordon Fee uses the term "intentionality" and highlights the importance of form, style and genre in the study of a passage. Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text,* 10.

details go together to make that point."[127] What is true for the preacher is true for the

non-preacher. The goal of study is to discern that "overall point," the central idea of the

author in their text.

To put it another way, "Discourse is *someone saying something about something

to someone,* and hermeneutics is the art of discerning the discourse in written works."[128]

The author is "saying" something, which implies communication. Since it is the usual

intent of a writer to communicate with their intended audience, the text should be studied

with the goal of understanding that which they intended to communicate. With due

awareness of the influence of genre and form on a piece of text, the language should be

read with its normal or plain meaning.[129]

A misunderstanding of the concept of verbal plenary inspiration appears to

undermine many readers in their study of the Bible. This doctrine affirms that God

inspired every word of the Bible. However, it is important to recognize that individual

words are without meaning unless combined with other words in discourse with the

purpose of communicating something. Vanhoozer writes, "This claim has an enormous

bearing on our subject because it directs our attention as interpreters not to isolated words

but to larger literary units."[130]

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[127] Emphasis added. Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis* rev. ed. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 147. Jean-Jacques Von Allmen urged the preacher to, "identify the main point, the principal *scopus* of the text." Jean-Jaques Von Allmen, *Preaching and Congregation* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1962), 53.

[128] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Lost in Interpretation? Truth, Scripture and Hermeneutics," *in Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48, no. 1 (March 2005): 106.

[129] The terms "normal" and "plain" are used rather than "literal" since the latter term is potentially misleading if it is understood to negate pertinent features of the discourse, such as genre or form. Vanhoozer seeks to overcome this potential problem by stating, "I believe that taking the Bible seriously requires us to take the Bible literally, that is, in its *literary* sense." Ibid., 109.

[130] Ibid., 106.

A literary unit is defined by the author's intention to communicate an idea. That is, meaningful communication does not just "say something," but rather "says something about something." Robinson defines these two parts of an idea as the subject (what you are talking about) and the complement (what you are saying about what you are talking about).[131] So the goal in studying a biblical text is to discern what the writer is communicating – their subject and their complement.

". . . to determine the author's central idea"

"Exegesis by definition means that one is seeking an author's own intent in what has been written."[132] With various reader-response interpretational methodologies, along with the simple reality that the author is very distant historically, there is a tendency in some approaches to biblical interpretation to lose the author. Vanhoozer laments the loss, "This lostness is a loss, a death, and with the death of the author goes what may be the last best hope for a criterion of validity."[133]

". . . by contextual analysis of content" (both literary and historical context)

In order to determine the idea of a literary unit, it is critical to consider the written context of that unit. With the possible exception of the Wisdom literature, the biblical author never intended for the literary unit to be considered independently of the broader

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[131] Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 41-43

[132] Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text,* 9. Stanley Porter and Kent Clarke consider the focus on the author's intended meaning in grammatico-historical exegesis as a traditional approach which is flawed by inherent difficulties. Stanley E. Porter and Kent D. Clarke, "What is Exegesis? An Analysis of Various Definitions," in Stanley E. Porter, ed., *A Handbook to the Exegesis of the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill Academic , 2002), 6-9.

[133] Vanhoozer, "Lost in Interpretation," 90.

text in which it is found.[134] Thus the importance of repeated reading of the larger context.

The Bible reader (preacher or not), must also be aware of how the author communicates their idea. To put genre and form awareness in its rightful place, Vanhoozer offers the following addition to his definition of written discourse, it is "what someone says *in some way* about something to someone."[135] The manner and form of writing is central to understanding a passage in its literary context.

To understand any given textual unit, it is important not only to know what it says, and how it says it, but also why it says it. This requires an understanding of the literary context; a clear sense of why this idea is included at this point in the flow of thought of the author.[136]

As well as the written context of a passage, there is also the historical context to consider. What was the situation of the writer, the occasion for writing, the experience of the intended readers, as well as the social, cultural, religious and political climates of the day?[137]

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[134] Fee agrees, *New Testament Exegesis*, 148. Thomas Long, using Luke's gospel as an example, states, "If Luke is simply stringing texts together like beads on a string, then we can remove one of those beads and study it alone without regard for the rest. But if Luke is an artist, carefully choosing, polishing, and arranging the beads, then we must appreciate the function a single bead plays in the whole necklace." Thomas Long, "Changing Trends in Preaching," in Day et al, *A Reader on Preaching*, 12.

[135] Emphasis original. Vanhoozer, "Lost in Interpretation," 106.

[136] Fee, *New Testament Exegesis,* 157. This aspect of purpose is developed in the next subsection.

[137] The list of aspects relevant to understanding the historical background of Biblical texts is potentially infinite. Charles Kraft coalesces all possible elements in a total cultural context, leading to what he calls "ethnolinguistic" hermeneutics. Obviously it is beyond anyone, trained Biblical scholar or typical untrained believer, to be able to understand the total cultural context of any given text. Nevertheless, it is important for the reader of a Biblical text to seek to understand the historical and cultural context of that passage to the best of their ability in their effort to understand the meaning and implications of that passage. Cf. C.H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979), cited in David J. Hesselgrave, "The Three Horizons: Culture, Integration and Communication," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28:4 (December 1985): 445.

Historical contextual awareness may require consideration of two historical settings. For instance, a textual unit within an epistle has one historical setting: the occasion of the epistle. On the other hand, a textual unit within a gospel may have two historical settings: the setting described in the text (during the ministry of Jesus), and the setting of the writer and recipients of the gospel (a generation later, probably in a different location and certainly in a different situation).[138] While this twofold historical setting may be helpful on some occasions, where the text does not speak of a historical setting, the interpreter is left to a certain level of conjecture and should therefore be wary of reading too much in to the intended meaning of the text.[139]

". . . by contextual analysis of both content _and intent_." (Author's purpose in writing)

The goal of discerning the central idea in a passage is not just to understand the content of what the author wrote, coalesced into its central idea, but also to understand the reason why the author wrote the passage.[140] An idea communicated is not mere abstraction, but intentional communication. It is the intent, as well as the content, of a passage's central idea that should drive the reader's application of that idea. So a goal for the reader of a biblical passage is to understand a passage well enough to allow it to

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[138] This twofold historical setting would also be applicable in the case of narrative books such as Genesis, Samuel or Acts. The two historical settings is supported by Ronald J. Allen, _Preaching an Essential Guide_ (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 33-34.

[139] Note that Allen, ibid., emphasizes the value of the writer's perceived situation to a greater extent than this project would encourage. Robinson describes reading a writer like Paul: "It's like overhearing one half of a telephone conversation. I think I know what the other person is saying, but I can't be sure. I can only guess at the full conversation from what I hear one person saying." Haddon Robinson, "The Heresy of Application," in _The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching,_ ed. Haddon Robinson & Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 307-308.

[140] In some books, the purpose is overt, for example John 20:31. However, in other books the purpose must be discerned through studying the overall flow of thought in the book, remaining sensitive to textual clues as to the original readers' situation. Haddon Robinson, "Homiletics and Hermeneutics," in Gibson, ed. _Making a Difference in Preaching,_ 76.

create in them the same response it was originally designed to create in the first readers. This same approach can and should be a goal in preaching. Robinson suggests that, "A true expository sermon should create in the listener the mood it produced in the reader."[141] Long goes further, ""The sermon may seek not only to say what the text says, it may also seek to do what the text does."[142]

Robinson notes that any idea can be developed in one or more of three ways. It can be explained, proven or applied. When an idea is explained, the intent is that the recipient understand it. When it is proven, the intent is that it be believed. When it is applied, the intent is that it be done. It is important to discern the intent of the writer as they develop their thought in the text. It may be that the idea requires slightly different development for the contemporary situation, but it is important that the force of the biblical passage not be lost in this process.[143]

Stage 2: Seek to legitimately apply the idea to personal and communal context
for transformed affection, belief and conduct.

"Seek to legitimately apply the idea"

Whether or not the contemporary implication of a text is a part of the exegetical process is a matter of ongoing scholarly debate.[144] Nevertheless, moving from what a

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[141] Ibid., 82.

[142] Long, "Changing Trends in Preaching," in Day *et al*, *A Reader on Preaching*, 14.

[143] Cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* 77-96. Robinson credits H. Grady Davis as the source of this three-fold approach to thinking. H. Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching (*Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958), 139-162, 242-264.

[144] For example, see Brian A. Shealy's, "Redrawing the Line Between Hermeneutics and Application," in *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New Versus the Old*, Robert L. Thomas (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 165-194.

text meant to the author, to its implications for today, are critical concerns for both the preacher (implications for them and their audience), and the non-preaching Bible reader (implications for them, and possibly to share with others).[145] As far as Fee is concerned, the exegete is constantly working toward two ends. One is to determine the overall point of the text. The other is, "To think about the application of the text."[146]

The goal at this stage is to take the author's idea from the passage and adapt it into an applied idea for today.[147] The meaning of a passage is limited by the author's situation and intent, but the possible applications are manifold.[148] The challenge is to discern legitimate applications or implications of the passage. Based on the theological assumptions already presented, the legitimacy of an application will be directly proportional to its reflection of the author's idea, as well as the broader teaching of the Bible (a necessary check on imaginative applications). When the author's idea is

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[145] Ronald J. Allen suggests that some texts are mostly inadequate for application outside of their original contexts. He cites the example of Paul turning Hymenaues and Alexander over to Satan (1Tim.1:19-20). The responsible preacher is consequently charged to present more appropriate alternatives to their audience. Allen, *Preaching an Essential Guide*, 62. This approach undermines the timeless value of a canon in which all scripture is inspired and useful. A more conservative evangelical approach would be to consider how the central idea of this passage can, and should, be applied to a particular audience today (in warning, in instruction, etc.).

[146] Fee, *New Testament Exegesis*, 147.

[147] Robinson calls this step, "The difficult bridge from then to now," noting that, "It's when we're applying Scripture that error most likely creeps in." Robinson, "The Heresy of Application," in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching,* 306-307.

[148] "But here we must remember the old adage: 'Interpretation is one; application is many.' This means that there is only one meaning to a passage of Scripture which is determined by careful study." Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook on Hermeneutics,* 3rd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 113. Also, Summit II of the International Council on Biblical Interpretation concurred with this principle: "We affirm that the meaning expressed in each biblical text is single, definite and fixed. We deny that the recognition of this single meaning eliminates the variety of its application." Article VII, "Articles of Affirmation and Denial," adopted by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, 10-13 November 1982, cited in Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics,* 142.

understood as well as possible, the progression to possible applications will be more consistent with the passage.[149]

"to personal and communal context"

Application of a biblical passage should be specific and definite. The natural tendency of preacher and non-preacher alike is to apply only through vague and impersonal generalities. Such "application" undermines any good study that has gone into the process. If the words of the Bible, written long ago and far away, are truly the living word of God, then our attempts at application must not maintain unnecessary distance. Having entered into the 'long ago and far away,' to determine the author's idea, the next step is to determine significance 'for me and us, here and now.' Unnecessary distance is maintained when application is general and vague: for unspecified others in unspecified terms.[150]

This project has argued from the outset that the Bible has a key role to play in the life of each individual believer. Consequently, each believer must seek to apply the ideas of the Bible in their own specific life context. This emphasis on individuality is not, however, in contrast to the community. The teaching of the Bible is clear that we as

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[149] Thomas Long argues that a strict movement from textual meaning to contemporary implications as a methodology is now effectively obsolete. Intriguingly, after the arguments for reader-response methodologies, Long gives two Biblical examples (James 5:1 and Mark 1:35-39), which he then interprets in a manner wholly consistent with grammatico-historical hermeneutics. It appears that recent progress in hermeneutical theory and exegetical methodologies has contributed to an increased understanding of the meaning of the original text as intended by the author, which is then applied to the contemporary situation – the very model of hermeneutics Long appears to be distancing himself from throughout the article. Thomas Long, "The Use of Scripture in Contemporary Preaching," in Day *et al, A Reader on Preaching*, 34-41.

[150] Fee underlines the importance of bringing the study of the Bible to a definite level of application, "This is necessary – hermeneutics is not just application, it is firstly historical study, but to be Biblical, it must also be applied to us as hearers of the text. We may become the subject studying the object, but this must come round full circle so that we are the object being marked by the subject – the text." Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text*, 14.

individuals are baptized into a corporate entity called the Church (1Cor. 12:12-13), and our calling is united rather than separated (cf. Eph. 4:1-6). Consequently, the individual seeking to apply their Bible study should consider applications at the level of both themselves personally, and the local church community of which they are a part.

It is evident, therefore, that the Bible study approach of the preacher and that of the non-preacher are again found to be similar. At a superficial level it appears that each seek to apply the idea of a passage to differing targets. The non-preacher has a target of applying the idea to themselves, whereas the preacher is seeking to apply not only to self (first), but also then to others (congregation). This implies that the preacher has an additional burden of understanding – seeking to enter into the world of contemporaries. Yet in reality, all believers should be concerned with personal and communal application. Non-preaching Bible readers are also in ministry and have opportunities to consider the implications of biblical texts first for themselves and then for others (in Sunday School classes, home Bible study groups, conversation with believers, conversation with non-believers, informal counseling situations, parenting situations, and so forth).

"for transformed affection, belief and conduct."

The goal of Bible study is not mere knowledge, although knowledge should increase through good study. The goal of Bible study is transformation. Thus the target in preaching or Bible study is not merely the brain, but the very core of the person – the affections, the mind, and the will.

In Ephesians 4:20-24 Paul writes to the believers who are in the process of transformation from "deceitful desires" (affections), to renewal "in the spirit of your

minds" (mind) and manner of life (conduct). This new life is because they "learned

Christ" by having "heard about him" and being "taught in him." This is in contrast to the

untaught and depraved Gentiles in verses 17-19. The cause is their "hardness of heart,"

(affections) that leads to "ignorance," as well as "darkened . . . understanding," and

"futility of mind" (mind), which consequently results in their "walk" or "sensuality,

greedy to practice every kind of impurity" (conduct).

True Bible study, whether pursued for personal devotional value, or in order to

preach the message of the passage to others, should result in transformation at the level of

the heart. When the heart is marked, thinking and decisions of the will are necessarily

influenced, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt. 12:34).

Throughout the Bible, the heart is presented as the center of human motivation, and

consequently the source of thinking and behavior.[151] Biblical transformation will touch

all levels of life: not only conduct (as exemplified in speech, in actions, in attitudes), but

also thinking, belief, values and affections.

Summary of Bible Study Method for both Preacher & Non-Preacher

The method detailed above is simply presented by a statement of the two stages:

Stage 1: Study a legitimate unit of Scripture to determine the author's central idea,

by contextual analysis of both content and intent.

Stage 2: Seek to legitimately apply the idea to personal and communal context

for transformed affection, belief and conduct.

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[151] For example Genesis 6:5; Deuteronomy 5:29; Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:18-20.

Or in shortened form:

> 1. Author's idea in context (literary & historical)
>
> 2. Applied idea in new context (personal & communal)

A slightly more detailed presentation of the hermeneutic approach proposed in this project can be stated in the following outline format:

In a legitimate unit of Scripture:

1. What is the **author's idea and intent** in context? (Back then . . .)
   a. What is the context?
      i. Historical context (when, where, why, to whom?)
      ii. Written context (genre/form, tone, what's before, after?)
   b. What is the author's idea?
      i. What's the author writing about?
      ii. What's the author saying about that?
   c. What is the author's intent?
      i. To explain so it is understood . . . and/or . . .
      ii. To convince so it is believed . . . and/or . . .
      iii. To motivate so it is done

2. How should I/we **apply that idea** in my/our context? (Today . . .)
   a. What is the contemporary context?
      i. Personal context
      ii. Communal context
   b. What is the need for the idea now?
      i. To explain so it is understood . . . and/or . . .
      ii. To convince so it is believed . . . and/or . . .
      iii. To motivate so it is done.

The Seminar Described

Having defined the outcome, goals, objectives and instructional strategy – organization and methodology – the seminar will now be described in narrative form. It is important to consider the practical issues of participants, location, timing and atmosphere.

The participants of the seminar should be preachers. This means that people who are interested in preaching, but have neither training nor experience, should first pursue a beginners preaching course of some kind. The participants should therefore be clear that this is a seminar on a specific element of preaching for those already in a preaching ministry.

The material can be reduced in length and incorporated into a full preaching course. The outcome for that element of the course would be more concerned with making the students aware of the opportunity to influence the Bible study habits of their listeners, make them aware of the principles relating to modeling and motivation, and give introductory suggestions on what to be careful of in their preaching. This would primarily be a seed-planting session, rather than a fully developed training seminar. Since the core idea of this thesis-project is essentially absent from the thinking of many preachers, reduced format teaching on the subject could be strategic simply to raise awareness and begin the thinking process for preachers. The structure of a reduced length teaching session would be as follows:

Building Better Bridges – Single Lecture (60 minutes)

Outcome – To make the student aware of their influence while preaching, on the personal Bible study habits of listeners, and to introduce the Building Better Bridges seminar tool so that students will know how to use it in future preaching.

Session 1 – The Influence of a Bridge-Builder (15 minutes)

- Brief review – preaching as bridge-building
- Primary focus for preaching influence – sermonic purpose

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- Secondary but significant focus – bridge-width (this refers not to the message carried over from the Bible to today by the preacher, but the width of the bridge that allows and motivates the listener to go back over the bridge to the Bible for themselves.)

- Basic principle: modeling

Session 2 – The Bible Study Bridge (10 minutes – the foundation of a full preaching course would be the process of studying the author's idea in a biblical text and then bringing that over to an applied idea in the contemporary setting. This "bridge" would only need brief review at this point in a course, emphasizing that the hermeneutical approach taken by the preacher is to be the same one used by the non-preacher.)

- The process for preacher (brief review)

- The process for listener (emphasis on this being the same)

Session 3 – Building Better Bridges (30 minutes)

- Principle of motivation

- Examples of de-motivating sermon element and motivating alternative

- Hand out Building Better Bridges Seminar Tool

- Orientation to the Seminar Tool

- Several brief examples with reference to the Guide

Conclusion – Final questions and clarification (5 minutes)

Notes on Conducting the Full Seminar

The location of the seminar should be planned carefully. Geographically the location should be within relatively easy reach of participants. Preferably, parking should be close and feel secure so that participants are not distracted by concern for their vehicle. The room for the seminar should be appropriate for the size of group in attendance. An over-filled room is uncomfortable for all, while a large empty room is not conducive for a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Consideration should be given to adequate lighting, comfortable room temperature, pens for participants, and having quality refreshments available. The materials for the seminar could be given out in a booklet form, which would keep materials together longer than loose handout sheets. However, handouts do allow the instructor to control when material is being looked at, which is important in this seminar as people will be tempted to look ahead to session three. Ultimately it is not the handouts or booklets that participants will refer to, but the Building Better Bridges Seminar Tool. Consequently, it is preferable to use handouts for this seminar.

Any unnecessary sources of distraction should be removed or minimized. For instance, a squeaky chair can be annoying to participants and overwhelmingly distracting for the person sat in it. Plan to have no interruptions from outside the group. It would be ideal to have the group seated in a semi-circle or in some way so they can see each other. Since the concept will be new to most, if not all, participants, it will help to relax any inherent tension in a setting with strangers.

While the goal is for the seminar to help improve the future preaching of participants, it is inevitable that some could feel guilty over aspects of their preaching in the past. If a participant regularly does something in preaching and then discovers it to

be a de-motivator or poor modeling of Bible study skills, then inevitably there could be an emotional reaction to that. Some might feel a sense of guilt, while others may resist the implication of the teaching and deny the validity of the suggestions made. In either case, a friendly group atmosphere where participants can see each other will aid the teaching process. For those who feel guilty, the sense that they are not alone will be an encouragement. For resisters, seeing other participants accepting the teaching will bring perspective to their resistance. It is important for the instructor to be aware of the emotional reaction of participants throughout the sessions and address any that are detected. The tone should be friendly and encouraging, diffusing tension if possible, rather than critical and condemning.

The seminar is designed to last two and a half hours. It should begin promptly in order to allow for interaction at the end, rather than running short on time and having to rush. The length allows flexibility in terms of when the seminar can be scheduled. A weekday evening is possible, as is a Sunday afternoon. The ideal would be a morning or afternoon when preachers are undistracted by an impending sermon, so perhaps a midweek morning would be ideal. It may be necessary to run the seminar at a time that is less ideal if some of the preachers are not in full-time pastoral ministry. So a Saturday afternoon or an evening may be necessary. The seminar leader should arrive early and make sure everything is organized before participants arrive in order to begin undistracted personal connection during the minutes before the start time. Again, some of the material may feel convicting for some participants, so the better the interpersonal connection with the instructor, the more likely the participants will be receptive to the

teaching. Refreshments available in the minutes before beginning will help people relax

and begin interpersonal connection with each other and with the instructor.

The atmosphere is important in any learning situation, but especially when the

content may carry emotional freight. In this case, as has been noted, there may be

elements that provoke guilt or resistance to the instruction. Therefore the atmosphere is

very important for the seminar to succeed. The intention is for participants to learn and

be changed by the seminar, any unhelpful aspects of atmosphere or any unnecessary

distractions will only provide opportunity to leave unchanged. The instructor's aim is not

to get through the material, but to affect change in the practice of preachers. For this

reason these practical considerations are worthy of particular attention.

Session I: The Influence of a Bridge-Builder. (30 minutes)

The seminar will formally begin with welcome and explanation of what is going

to happen during the time together. At this point, it is important to give a clear outcome

for the whole seminar. The instructor might say, "By the end of this seminar, you will be

equipped to evaluate your sermon and modify it in order to model healthy Bible study

skills for your listener, and to motivate your listeners to be in the Bible for themselves.

That is what this seminar is about, it is about how your preaching can get your people to

be Bible people, even when you're not there to preach to them!" If the participants do

not know each other, then it would be helpful to briefly have each person introduce

themselves: name, where from, ministry role. It is the leader's responsibility to make the

initial interaction as warm and friendly as possible. The first handout should not be given

to participants yet, it is better for them not to be reading ahead during the initial phase of interpersonal connection.

An effective way to begin the seminar after the introductions would be to take a brief time for a positive brainstorming session. The question should be projected with powerpoint so that it doesn't need to be repeated unnecessarily. "What are some Biblical images of the preacher . . . ?" The focus should remain on Biblical images to avoid the potentially negative images around in contemporary society (such as salesperson, fundraiser, etc.) As images are shared, record them on a flipchart and draw out the implications of the terms. The participants should be doing the talking, but the instructor can be careful to emphasize some element of influence whenever possible. Possible images might include "herald," "sower," "ambassador," "steward," "shepherd/pastor," "workman," etc.[152]

Keep the brainstorm relatively brief and then move into a very positive presentation of the privilege of being a preacher of God's Word today. Introduce John Stott's metaphor of the preacher as "bridge-builder." At this point the handouts for the first session can be distributed. (Handouts are included in appendix 1)

The top diagram on the handout can then be filled in (two images missing on participant handout) by participants as the diagram is constructed on the powerpoint. The notion of a preacher being a bridge-builder is explained in relatively simple terms. At this point Robinson's definition of expository preaching can be projected and shown to include the progress from rightly understanding the Biblical passage, then proceeding through the preacher to be relevantly presented to others. It must be clear that the emphasis in expository preaching is the Bible itself, how we trust the Bible to influence

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[152] This is Stott's list in *Between Two Worlds*, 135-137.

lives. This opportunity can be taken to emphasize the importance of the Bible in the life

of the believer – chapter 2, Theological Framework, provides material for this session.

Depending on the participants and the available time the instructor needs to determine

how much material is necessary at this point. The seminar is designed to use two and a

half hours so that it can fit in an evening, but if more time is available, then it should be

used to strengthen the understanding of participants.

The next step is to highlight the importance of the sermon's purpose statement in

the preparation of an effective sermon. Perhaps using the oft-quoted conclusion, "Now

may the Spirit apply to our hearts and lives the lessons learned in this passage," or similar

can serve as a contrast to intentional expository preaching with clearly defined purpose.

So far the teaching has been entirely focused on basic preaching theory, the concept of

building *better* bridges has not been introduced. It may be helpful to simply clarify the

three key ingredients of an expository sermon – the Bible, its Big Idea, and relevant

purpose – Robinson's image of the arrow and the target are easily memorable.

The next element of this first session is critical. The core of the seminar idea

should be clarified at this point. The instructor should carefully review the bridge-

builder metaphor in respect to a Sunday morning sermon. (Stott's metaphor of the

bridge-builder recognizes the preacher's interest in both the world of the biblical text,

and the world of the listeners. The preacher's role is to build a bridge that begins in

the Bible text and crosses over to the lives of the listeners with a message that is

determined by the biblical revelation.)[153]

By emphasis on the Sunday morning sermon, the instructor can then ask about

Monday morning, Wednesday afternoon, etc. Where will the listener's go for their

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[153] Ibid., 139.

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spiritual food then? The instructor can then point out that the bridge metaphor is presented graphically in two dimensions, there is no sense of depth, or better, width in reference to the bridge. The preacher brings across the message from the Word in one direction. Yet the reality is that people need more than a sermon to be growing spiritually, they need to be going across the bridge to the Bible for themselves, day-by-day. The concept of a narrow one-way bridge, or a wider two-way bridge are then introduced and explained as the focus of this seminar. The instructor can create need for the rest of the seminar at this point, explaining that the seminar will give practical help on how to build wider bridges, how to give people the ability to get the input from the Bible and how to motivate people to go over the bridge and get that input. Participants will not be clear on the specifics at this point, but they must be expectant that the rest of the time together will equip them to better model and motivate good Bible study habits for their listeners.

Before taking a break, the instructor introduces the first of two principles that must grip all wide-bridge building preachers. Introduce the basic principle of modeling – "People see, people do." Use statements from chapter 3 of this thesis-project, Literature Review, to emphasize the importance of the principle. Illustrate in reference to childhood development, for example, a child will hold a book or magazine even before they can read, because they've seen others do it. Also use a practical example to illustrate. The instructor could stop talking and look up at the ceiling, within seconds most participants will also look up at the ceiling. Have the participants repeat the phrase several times, ask for individuals to say it. By making the repetition humorous, the instructor can mark the principle clearly into each participant. The participants at this point can be divided into

two's or three's and asked to explain the principle and then to convince the other group member(s), in sixty seconds or less, why it is important to model good Bible study habits through preaching.

At this point bring the people back together and explain what will be coming next, then go to the break. A break of ten minutes will allow people to stretch, get more refreshments and then return for the next session.

Session II: The Bible Study Bridge (30 Minutes)

It is important to be clear about the intention of this session. This session is not about practical advice, it is still foundational. Yet having established the important principle of modeling at the end of session one, this session builds sequentially as it is concerned with the focus of the preacher's modeling of hermeneutics. It may be appropriate to explain that this is a shorter session that will focus on the hermeneutical process, but at the same time point out that "hermeneutics" is a potentially de-motivating term for a preacher to include in a sermon. So instead the seminar will choose the term, "Bible study process" or similar.

Distribute the handout at the start of this session. (Handouts for sessions are included in appendix 1) It has blanks for the participants to fill in. The instructor should be careful to not rush through the material, even though it is simple. Participants need time to think and process the information, especially in reference to their own approach to Bible study. The notion of a "Big Idea Hermeneutic" may be familiar to the instructor, but it will not be familiar to the participants. So the instructor works through the process for the preacher, focusing on the Bible study element of preaching preparation. Then the

instructor works through the process for the non-preacher. The definitions given on the handout end up identical, which will become evident to the participants. The instructor should not state up front that the processes are the same, but allow that realization to form during the explanation. Once both processes have been explained, the instructor can clarify the slight differences in process, but show that the differences are truly negligible. In fact, if preachers are concerned with applying the idea to themselves first, then to others, this would be the same for non-preachers. The non-preachers should seek to apply the Biblical idea to self first, and then consider how it would apply to others too. They may not preach, but in conversation, in parenting, in friendships, in other ministries, they can be applying the idea of the text for the benefit of others.

At this point in the seminar the basic model of the Bible Study Bridge should be reinforced using a simple combination of hand motions and repetition. The elements would be as follows:

- "Study a Biblical passage . . . " (open hands like a book)

- ". . . for the author's . . ." (writing motion)

- ". . . idea . . ." (point to head)

- ". . . in his context . . ." (gesture back in time with thumb)

- ". . . then . . ." (both hands make the arc of the bridge)

- ". . . seek to legitimately apply . . ." (gesture to heart, head and hands)

- ". . . the idea . . ." (point to head)

- ". . . in our context." (point toward the ground)

Having emphasized the simple model of the Bible Study Bridge, the rest of the session can be given to considering the more detailed description of the process. Again,

there are blanks for the participants to fill in, but the participants can probably guess these in light of previous instruction. By leaving some elements of the handout blank, the participants will be motivated to listen and more engaged with the material as their brain has to work with it. Simply reading the information would allow them to scan and not assimilate. Interactively consider the description, making sure people are clear on the concept. At this point a very simple Biblical text can be introduced as an example, using the Bible study bridge to show the process of "studying" that passage. The Biblical text cannot require complex explanation, purely from the standpoint of the time it would take in the seminar. Possible texts for this purpose include Psalm 100, Psalm 117, Isaiah 40:27-31, Luke 18:9-14, Hebrews 12:1-3, or similar short passages.

The final five minutes of the session can be used for the participants to explain to their partner (working in pairs), the Bible Study Bridge, this time using the more detailed statements on the handout. Finish with a quick review of the modeling principle, since what people see a preacher do with the Bible, they are likely to do themselves.

At this point the group can relax for another ten minute break. The instructor can build anticipation for the next session by mentioning the practical advice and seminar tool that will be distributed in the final session together.

Session III: Building Better Bridges. (60 Minutes*)*
This is the third and final session of the seminar, followed only by ten minutes for filling in an evaluation of the seminar. The session should begin with an introduction that tells participants what this session will do for them. By the end of this session they will know what it means to model and motivate better Bible study habits to their listeners while they

preach. Begin with another review of the modeling principle. This repetition will serve

to drive home the important notion of people copying what they see done before them.

Then add the concept of motivation – "Build confidence in competence and emphasize

the relevance." People are likely to copy what they see, so it is important to model a

healthy approach to the Bible, but what will motivate them to copy a healthy model? The

issue of motivation is important. Using the statement on the handout and the two-piece

puzzle, explain the notion of motivation through offering competence and demonstrating

relevance.

Helpful illustrations should be used to make the abstract understandable. For

example, the instructor might share a story like this,

> "When I was a young boy, my Dad decided I should learn to ride my bicycle
> without training wheels. So he tied a broom handle to the back of my bicycle and
> walked along holding the broom handle to keep me steady. I felt like I could
> never ride my bike without those training wheels! But Daddy kept telling me I
> could do it. He progressed to a slight run and I became more steady, but still,
> didn't believe I could ride the bike without him holding on. Finally he let go. I
> wobbled, but kept on going. Just a few feet, but I had done it! I can do this! That
> feeling of competence stirred a new confidence in me. I can ride a bike! With
> that new found confidence I was motivated to ride some more. Soon I rose to
> new levels of competence, each time adding more confidence. Competence
> breeds confidence, breeds competence breeds confidence, and so on!"

The memorable statement of the motivating principle can then be filled in on the

handouts and recited in a group. Again have participants take a minute to explain the two

elements of motivation to a partner in relation to the subject of the seminar.

At this point in the seminar it is important to give some examples of a motivating

element in a sermon. For example:

- Before reading a Bible text, do not ask people a question they might not be

    able to answer from a first reading, but rather tell them what they are about to

see. Then when it is read they feel competent to see what a writer is communicating.

- Without being patronizing, ask rhetorical questions in reference to the text that the people are able to answer. For instance, after reading the first verses of an epistle by Paul, ask who wrote the letter? Since they can see that it was Paul, they will feel competent. By adding some background information with which they are familiar, the preacher is modeling the importance of considering the original author, but is doing so in a way that is motivating since the listener feels competent to do the same.

Perhaps demonstrate a de-motivating sermon element, critique it as a group, then offer a more helpful alternative. For instance:

- "In the Greek text of Romans 8:37, the word is actually *hupernikao*, which is actually a *hapax legomenon*, a Pauline compound term taking *nikao* to a greater level." This sentence can be critiqued in reference to the use of an unknown language (Greek) and potentially unknown technical terminology ("*hapax legomenon*" and "compound term"). Ask the participants how this breaks the rule of motivation. The issue of competence will emerge, and perhaps relevance as well. Then, as a group come up with an alternative. For example, "Notice what Paul says here in Romans 8:37 – we are not just "conquerors," those who fight and win a victory, we are "*more than* conquerors" – see those extra two words there? This is even better!"

Distribute the Building Better Bridges Seminar Tool at this point. Take a few moments to orient the participants to the format of the tool. A sermon paragraph can be projected, then the instructor can talk the participants through the process of finding the appropriate session on the tool and evaluating the projected paragraph. Once the participants are more at ease with the tool, they can then be given examples and allowed to think them through using just the tool. An additional handout with several examples can be distributed, allowing participants time to identify weaknesses and suggest alternatives.

The final element of this session should be interactive, allowing for questions and answers, clarification and anything that would be helpful to the participants. Be sure to end the seminar positively. If negative emotional reaction has not been shown to this point, it would be appropriate to raise the issue of possible guilt for past preaching and speak of the reality of forgiveness and hope for the future. Do not let this session become discouraging, but rather strive to keep the tone positive and encouraging. Conclude with encouragement and hope in terms of what these preachers will be able to achieve in their ministry, pointing to the exciting possibilities if their listeners have good modeling and are better motivated to be in the Bible for themselves.

The last few minutes will need to be given to filling in an evaluation. If possible, encourage participants to stay for a while after the seminar, enjoy refreshments and interact together. Avoid a rapid exodus to allow for further informal clarification and interpersonal encouragement. For the seminar to leave a lasting impression, it is important to finish on time, to finish in a positive manner and to leave a friendly and encouraging last impression.

While it is necessary to get immediate feedback, the instructor can also follow up with participants by email or in person to pursue further feedback with the benefit of hindsight. Feedback is critical to improve the teaching experience for future seminars and to collect helpful illustrations for future teaching use.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

The seminar described in chapter 4 was presented on Thursday August 16th, 2007,

in Caterham, England. It was advertised as "Building Better Bridges: Preach so that your

listeners will study the Bible effectively for themselves." The advertising described the

focus of the seminar as well as the target audience: preachers who preach regularly or

semi-regularly. Eleven men attended the seminar.

The eleven individuals present represented seven different churches in the Greater

London area. Eight of them preach once or twice per month, two less frequently and one

has not yet preached a sermon. Four of the churches represented have an open Plymouth

Brethren heritage, which explains why they do not preach weekly, even though they are

leaders in these churches. The other three churches are also conservative in their

theology. Two of the attendees participated in a four-day preaching course I taught in

2006, but the rest have had no exposure to formal preaching training.

The seminar was reduced to two hours in length due to the distance some

participants had to travel, thereby allowing a start time late enough in the evening to

accommodate them. Essentially all the material was covered, but some practical

exercises and reviews were removed to fit the revised schedule.

The setting for the seminar worked well. The large living room comfortably

seated everybody and fit the specifications suggested in chapter 4. A variety of quality

snacks and drinks were available. Two brief breaks during the seminar allowed people to enjoy more refreshment as the evening progressed.

The overall sense was that the seminar was successful. The participants appeared genuinely thankful and interaction between them was good throughout the evening. As the instructor, I have gained helpful insight for improving future seminars on this subject. After summarizing and reflecting on the feedback received, I will conclude the chapter with a personal evaluation of what should be kept, what can be improved and possibilities for future study in this area.

Participant Feedback

Each participant completed an evaluation form at the end of the seminar. This form consisted of two biographical questions (results reflected in the second paragraph of this chapter, in reference to how often they preach and whether they have received formal preaching training), nine Likert scale statements and two open-ended questions.

Likert Scale Questions

The first four questions related to the concept presented in the seminar. Specifically, the concept that a preacher can and should deliberately preach in such a way as to model and motivate personal Bible study. All agreed or strongly agreed that this concept was new to them. The one person who disagreed was one of those who had attended my preaching course in 2006, and so may have been introduced to the idea then. When asked if the concept is important for preachers, the majority (6) strongly agreed, (4) agreed and one chose to remain neutral. The next two questions asked whether they

had, on reflection, missed opportunities in the past to model and motivate effective Bible study. The majority agreed, some strongly agreed and one again chose to remain neutral.

These four sets of responses affirm that the concept of "building better bridges" is new to these preachers, and once introduced to it, they see its value and recognize that they have room for improvement in terms of their own ministry. This affirms the need for the seminar.

The next four questions focused on the instruction given during the seminar. Two agreed, and the rest strongly agreed, that the instructor's intended outcome for the seminar was clear. The teaching style used in the seminar was considered effective by all except one (again, neutral, but those agreeing split equally between those who strongly agreed and those who agreed). Initial evaluation of the handouts, detailed guide and summary was also positive. Five strongly agreed, and six agreed that the resources provided will be useful. All agreed that as a result of the seminar they are now equipped to produce sermons that will both model and motivate personal Bible study (one strongly agreed).

These four sets of responses affirm the effectiveness of the seminar. Participants particularly seemed to appreciate the clarity of intended outcome and the quality of resources provided. The presentation of the detailed guide (comb bound) and summary sheet (laminated and in color), surely were significant since time was not taken to consider the tools in detail. The slightly more reserved response to whether they consider themselves equipped would certainly be helped by taking more time to reinforce and practice the principles and skills presented in the seminar. Further clarification on teaching style will be given in the open-ended questions to follow.

The last of the nine questions concerned whether the participants would recommend the seminar to other preachers. All agreed that they would; five of them strongly agreeing with the statement. It is encouraging to see a group of preachers affirming the idea of the seminar, the teaching of the seminar and the need for it to be presented to other preachers.

The two open-ended questions simply asked for the "three greatest strengths of this seminar" and the "three things that would improve this seminar." First, a summary of the strengths will be given. Second, a summary of the suggestions will follow.

<center>The Perceived Strengths of the Seminar</center>

All participants gave three strengths from their perspective. These were both encouraging and informative. They can be summarized under five headings.

Teaching Style

Every evaluation included a positive comment regarding the teaching style used. The delivery was considered relaxed and effective. The attitude of the instructor was seen as personable, with a clarity that resulted from sticking to the aim of the seminar as well as the use of easy and clear language.

Several participants made comment regarding the authority of the instruction. "Peter speaks with authority" was typical in this regard. Two forms included the comment that the "presenter knows his subject / material very well" and one mentioned knowledge of the Bible.

One comment was given regarding the practical illustrations used throughout the evening. Interestingly, one participant highlighted the fact that reference was made to "highly acclaimed authors in this field" which served to underline the strength of the seminar.

Seminar Structure

Three participants made comments regarding the structure of the seminar. A "very clear progression of ideas" and "helpful steps in achieving the goals presented" were noted. The other comment observed that the evening followed a pattern, "laying a thought and building from it." Evidently a sense of structure is important so that participants can be confident that the seminar will achieve its stated aim.

Seminar Content

The focus and content of the seminar was a new concept to all involved, so the majority mentioned the idea as a strength. A reserved, "good principles" at one extreme, and an unreserved, "the idea is brilliant" at the other.   Participants mentioned that it clarified issues they had not previously considered. Several participants affirmed the basic conviction of the seminar that non-preachers need to be studying the Bible for themselves. One participant stated that the seminar had left them with the feeling that they could achieve the goal of modeling Bible study through preaching.

Seminar Tools

Five participants made reference to the materials handed out during the seminar. One commented on the handouts, the rest focused on the "Building Better Bridges Guide" and the "Building Better Bridges Summary." These tools were considered helpful, useful and well-presented. This seminar introduces a new concept, so it is important to provide practical help for implementing the concept in sermon preparation.

General Preaching Instruction

The first two segments of the evening focused on the nature of preaching and the nature of Bible study. These sessions were foundational to the third segment which introduced how to model and motivate personal Bible study. However, five participants commented on how the evening had been helpful in their understanding of how to handle the Bible or how to prepare sermons.

One participant wrote that the seminar had built his confidence and competence to handle the Bible. Another mentioned that it was helpful to understand the need for determining the Big Idea in a unit of Scripture, and the need for relevance in preaching. Another found the eight opportunities to model and motivate, the eight categories used in the guide, to provide a helpful structure for a sermon. These are not specific to the subject of the seminar, but perhaps reflect the need for basic preaching training accessible to the preachers in the churches represented.

<u>The Suggestions Offered to Improve the Seminar</u>

The participants were less forthcoming on suggestions for improvement, four people taking the question as another opportunity to affirm the seminar and express gratitude for the evening. However, there were some helpful suggestions:

The Need for More Preaching Training

The most consistent suggestion reflected the lack of training the participants have previously received. For one participant the whole notion of an "idea" in a passage was new and too much to take in on this first exposure. Three people mentioned the need for the seminar to be much longer and to include the entire process of sermon preparation. This is unrealistic for an evening seminar on this subject, but does show the hunger for training. One of the churches represented asked for an evening beginner's seminar on preaching.

The Need for More Examples

Three people made note of the need for more examples and illustrations. The suggestion that the seminar go longer and reinforce the content more fully is entirely appropriate in light of the fact that the seminar was reduced in length slightly from the original plan. One participant felt the seminar would be improved by more opportunity to debate the issues and question the teaching. Again this seems to reflect a lack of common ground on such issues as hermeneutics, expository preaching, "Big Idea" preaching and so on.

The Passion of the Instructor

Two participants made comments regarding the passion of the instruction. They stated that the passion with which the idea was presented gave the impression that there is no room for any alternative position or debate. While offering this critique, the idea itself was affirmed as excellent. However, this does indicate that the attitude of delivery is worthy of further consideration.

Other Presentation Issues

One participant commented that the position of the projector should be changed so that the instructor does not have to step into the beam of light periodically. In view of the room dimensions this would have been difficult to avoid.

The seminar was advertised as being for those who preach regularly or semi-regularly. The one participant who has not preached before mentioned that the assumption of the instructor that all present were preachers was unhelpful. This is a helpful reminder to find out not only participants names and locations, but also their experience in preaching. An assumption was made based on the advertising, but it was a wrong assumption on the part of the instructor.

Other Content Issues

One attendee suggested that the theory would be stronger with some proof that it works. This is an obvious area for further study. While exhaustive study may be prohibitive, perhaps a small scale study would be helpful for future participants in the seminar.

One of the church's represented does not have a commitment to expository preaching. Consequently there were several questions raised, and one feedback suggestion made, relating to the subject of topical preaching. The five-minute response given in the seminar regarding how a "big idea" relates to a topical sermon proved helpful in clarifying aspects of the expository process, but left more questions for those who assume preaching has to be topical to be effective. Again, this points to the need for more complete training, but also suggests the value of further clarification of terms at the beginning of the seminar. It would be beneficial to clarify the nature of expository preaching, and to show that the assumptions of expository preaching do allow for topical sermon forms to still be expository in nature.

Instructor's Evaluation

The seminar was a success, yet there are always ways to improve instruction. This final section of the chapter will highlight the elements of the seminar that are considered worthy of repetition, followed by suggestions for improvement. Areas for further study will conclude the chapter.

Elements Worthy of Repetition

The three sessions of the seminar all proved their worth. The foundation laid in terms of the nature of preaching, the Bible study process and the importance of the Bible in the life of all believers, was critical. These first two sessions could be improved, but they should not be removed.

The Guide and Summary given to participants were critical in making the teaching of the seminar applicable. Without these tools, participants would feel overwhelmed by the concepts presented and unable to recall all that they would need in the future. The offer of receiving updated versions of both tools was also appreciated. In effect, the slightly shortened seminar functioned as an introduction to the concepts and then to the tools. A longer seminar would allow more time to practice evaluating sermon elements using the tools provided.

The effort put into the setting and refreshments was worthwhile. This created a relaxed atmosphere that helped the seminar work well. The fact that the concept presented in the seminar was new did not create any apparent tension in regard to what people may have failed to do in the past. The relaxed atmosphere likely played a key role in that.

Every element of variation in the teaching style should be kept. Brainstorming, interaction, repetition, handouts (see appendix 1) and powerpoint presentation (see appendix 2) were all helpful. More time would allow more interactive elements such as explaining new concepts to a partner, group practice of new skills and interaction with the instructor.

Suggestions for Improvement

The main suggestion that must be made is to take more time. The seminar is designed to work in two and a half hours. This should be the minimum length of time for the seminar, assuming that people share some basic assumptions. The more participants vary from basic commitments to the centrality of the Bible, the expository nature of

biblical preaching, and the conservative hermeneutics advocated in this thesis-project, the more time will be necessary to allow for necessary dialogue. In the British culture it would be wrong to assume that those who preach regularly in local churches have received some preaching training. Perhaps a day-long seminar, giving more attention to the basics of Bible study and sermon preparation, would only strengthen this seminar. If the material was extended into a full day of sessions, this would allow for an example passage to be used to explain the study process, the sermon preparation process and then the process of evaluation using Building Better Bridges Guide and Summary.

An obvious suggestion is to integrate this seminar into a full preaching course thereby laying the foundations throughout the course. This was attempted in 2006 at the Better Bible Teaching course, and will be pursued in future courses.

The two principles that undergird the concept of the seminar need more balanced attention. The more accessible principle of modeling was repeated and reinforced throughout the evening. However, the more complex principle of motivation was introduced late into the seminar. Consequently, the participants would not have internalized it as intended. These principles must be given early. Both principles need to be reinforced creatively and repeatedly throughout the seminar.

On a practical level, it would be helpful to designate a host for the seminar. I had to give attention to pouring drinks and making people comfortable. The servant leader approach is biblical and probably helpful, but practically it is more difficult to focus on conversations and teaching when concerned over matters of refreshment. This might have also helped avoid the lack of awareness regarding the participants' level of preaching experience.

One key to the lasting impact of this seminar is the effectiveness of the Building Better Bridges Guide and the summary chart. Both tools should be continually revised for clarity and content.

Further Study

The concepts presented throughout this thesis-project are important. Going through the process of studying, writing, planning and presenting the material has only reinforced my conviction that this is a very needed project in the field of homiletics. Further work beyond the Doctor of Ministry program will fall into two categories: further research and propagation.

This thesis-project is not definitive, exhaustive or conclusive. The hermeneutical model presented, the principles of modeling and motivation, as well as the instruction for improving a sermon, can all be improved in the future. As the subject is taught, suggestions from participants can be collected. Further writing in the field of homiletics can be surveyed for the passing comments that will spawn further instruction in this project. Furthermore, empirical studies could be pursued to evaluate the effectiveness of this training in influencing preachers, as well as the influence of preachers on the Bible study habits of their listeners. While empirical study is difficult due to the long-term nature of the intended results, the value of such study would augment the work presented here.

The propagation of the idea will be pursued. I plan to lead the seminar again, and adapt it for use in different contexts and formats. Since this concept is essentially new, I

intend to pursue its publication in due course. This will place the material in the full

public domain of preaching literature.

APPENDIX 1

SEMINAR HANDOUTS

The handouts from the three sessions of the seminar are included. Blank spaces

on the handouts are filled in for ease of reference. The blank spaces are indicated by

underlined terms.

# Session 1 – The Influence of a Bridge-Builder

The Preacher's Task:
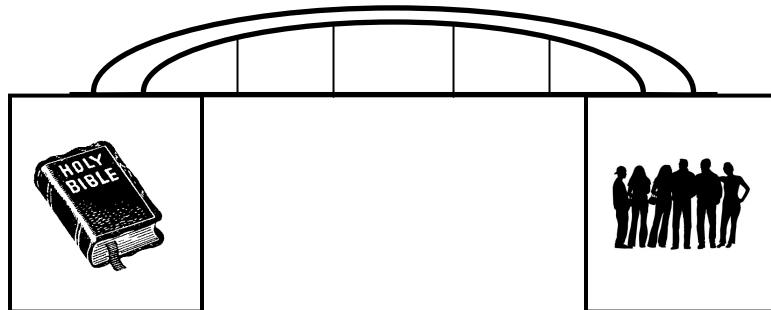
**The Influencer :** The ***B i b l e***

Primary Influence : The Sermon's Specific ***P u r p o s e***

"What one expects to happen in the hearer as a result of hearing the sermon."
Haddon Robinson

Secondary Influence : The ***T w o*** - Way Bridge.
(but significant)
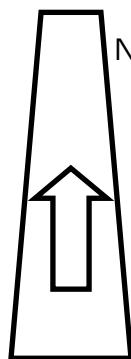
Narrow Bridge Preaching

Wide Bridge Preaching
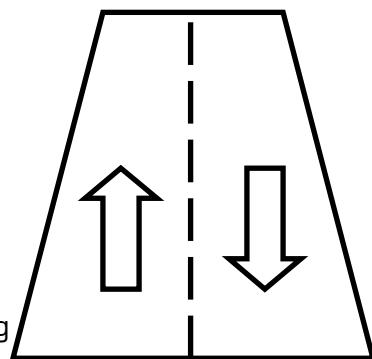
Basic Principle: Modeling

People ___s e e___ , people ___d o___ !

Session 2 – The Bible Study Bridge

The Process for Preacher:

Study a Biblical passage:

a u t h o r ' s   i d e a

in his ***c o n t e x t***

Seek to legitimately

a p p l y   i d e a

in ***our   c o n t e x t***
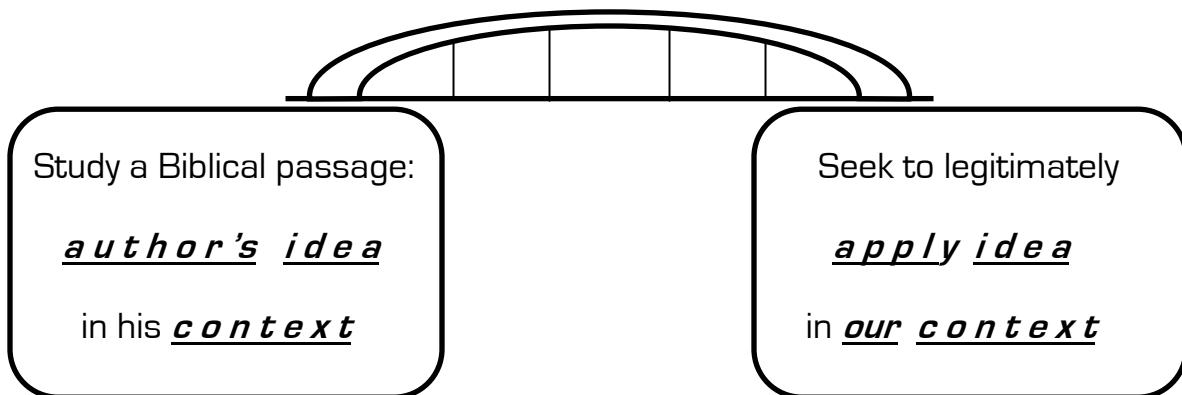
The Process for Non-Preacher:

Study a Biblical passage:

a u t h o r ' s   i d e a

in ***h i s   c o n t e x t***

Seek to legitimately

a p p l y   i d e a

in ***our   c o n t e x t***
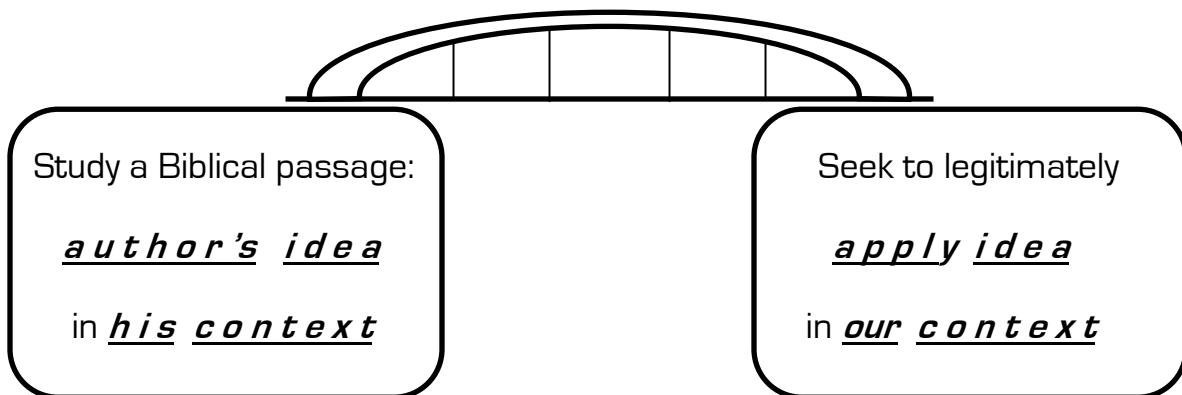
The Process in More Detail:

Stage 1	Stage 2
Study a legitimate ***u n i t*** of Scripture by contextual analysis (in book & in time) of both content and ***i n t e n t***, to determine the author's central idea,	Seek to legitimately apply the idea to ***p e r s o n a l*** and communal context for transformed affection, belief and ***c o n d u c t***.

Remember The Basic Principle of Modeling:

People <u>s e e</u> , <u>p e o p l e d o</u> .

Session 3 – Building Better Bridges

Basic Principle: Modeling

<u>**People see**</u> , <u>**people do**</u> !

Basic Principle: Motivation

"People are more likely to do something that will benefit them, that they feel capable of doing, than they are of doing something they are not certain will benefit them and feel incapable of doing."

2-Piece Puzzle:

| Competence breeds confidence (breeds competence breeds confidence breeds . . .) | People will pursue activity that is <u>**r e l e v a n t**</u> to their needs |
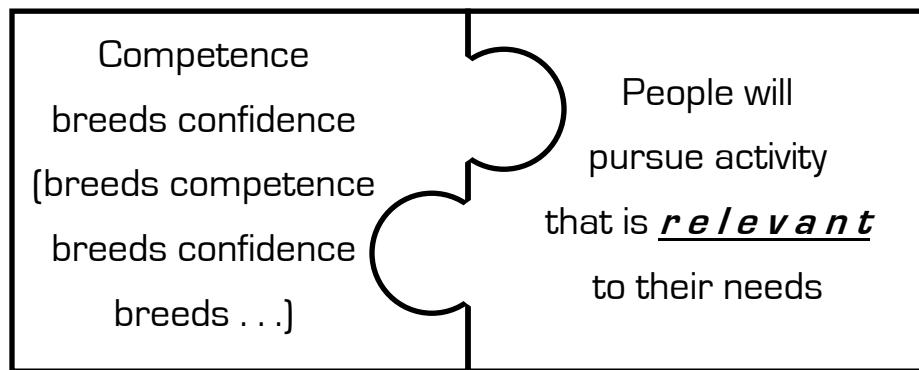
The Motivation Principle:

Build <u>**c o n f i d e n c e**</u> in <u>**c o m p e t e n c e**</u>, while emphasizing <u>**r e l e v a n c e**</u>

Where can a preacher model and motivate Bible study in a sermon?

1. *<u>Introduction</u>*

2. *<u>Bible Reading</u>*

3. *<u>Big Idea</u>*

4. *<u>Sermon Structure</u>*

5. *<u>Explanation & Support</u>*

6. *<u>Illustration & Application</u>*

7. *<u>Conclusion</u>*

8. *<u>Delivery</u>*

APPENDIX 2

SEMINAR PRESENTATION SLIDES

The visual presentation used in the seminar is on Microsoft Powerpoint, projected for all to see. The slides are presented in paper format for reference only. Background images have been removed to allow for black and white printing.

1.
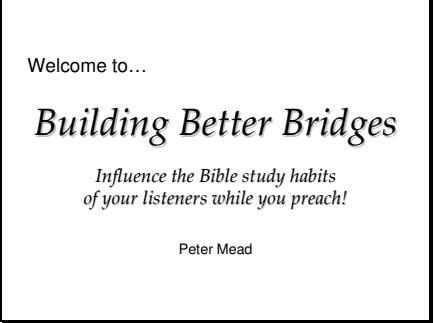
Welcome to…

Building Better Bridges

*Influence the Bible study habits
of your listeners while you preach!*

Peter Mead

2.
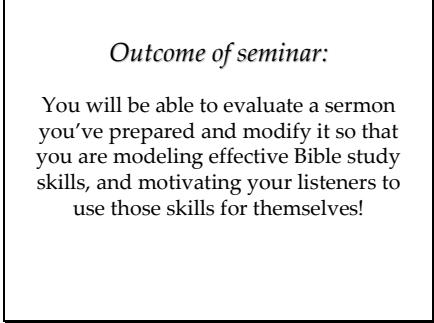
Outcome of seminar:

You will be able to evaluate a sermon you've prepared and modify it so that you are modeling effective Bible study skills, and motivating your listeners to use those skills for themselves!

3.

Biblical Images For Preacher

Herald
Sower
Ambassador
Steward
Shepherd
Workman

John Stott, Between Two Worlds

4.
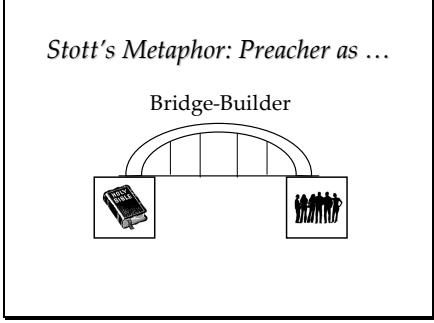
Stott's Metaphor: Preacher as …

Bridge-Builder

5.
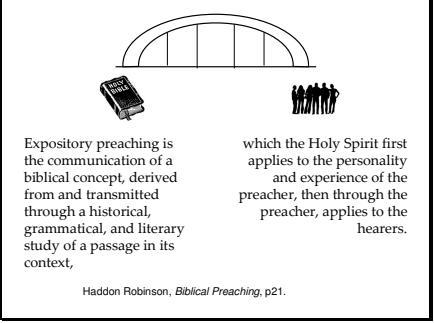
Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context,

which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.

Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, p21.

6.
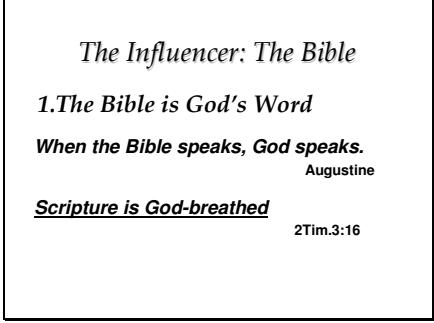
The Influencer: The Bible

1.The Bible is God's Word

When the Bible speaks, God speaks.
Augustine

Scripture is God-breathed
2Tim.3:16

7.

The Influencer: The Bible

1.*The Bible is God's Word*
2.***God's Word transforms lives***

Scripture is . . . <u>useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness</u>   **2Tim.3:16**

8.

The Influencer: The Bible

1.*The Bible is God's Word*
2.*God's Word changes us*
3.***The whole Bible is God's Word***

<u>All Scripture is God-breathed</u>

                                          2Tim.3:16

9.

The Influencer: The Bible

1.*The Bible is God's Word*
2.*God's Word changes us*
3.*The whole Bible is God's Word*
4.***God's Word is for all believers***
<u>so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.</u>   **2Tim.3:17**

10.

So what is a sermon?

Biblical Passage   **+ Big Idea**   **+ Purpose / Relevance**

11.

Primary Influence in Sermon?

"What one expects to happen in the hearer as a result of hearing the sermon."
Haddon Robinson

Sermon Purpose

12.

Secondary Significant Influence

The Two-Way Bridge

13.

You can preach sermons that change lives
(purpose)
<u>and</u>
influence the Bible study habits of your listeners so that they will study the Bible more during the week!

14.

Basic Principle: Modeling

People See,

People Do!

15.

Session 2
*The Bible Study Bridge*

16.

Bible Study Bridge for Preacher
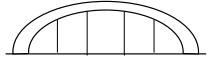
Study a biblical passage: Seek to legitimately
author's idea   apply idea
in his context   in our context

17.

Bible Study Bridge: Non-Preacher

Study a biblical passage: Seek to legitimately
author's idea   apply idea
in his context   in our context

18.

Bible Study Bridge: More Detail

Study a legitimate <u>unit</u>   Seek to legitimately
of Scripture by   apply the idea to
contextual analysis (in   <u>personal</u> and communal
book & in time) of both   context for transformed
content and <u>intent</u>, to   affection, belief and
determine the author's   <u>conduct</u>.
central idea.

19.

Basic Principle: Modeling

People See,

People Do!

20.

Bible Study Bridge
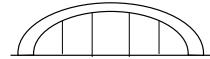
Study a biblical passage: **Seek to legitimately**
author's idea   **apply idea**
in his context   **in our context**

21.

Explain to your partner:
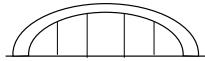
Study a legitimate unit of Scripture by contextual analysis (in book & in time) of both content and intent, to determine the author's central idea.

Seek to legitimately apply the idea to personal and communal context for transformed affection, belief and conduct.

22.

Session 3
Building Better Bridges

You can preach sermons that change lives (purpose) <u>and</u> influence the Bible study habits of your listeners so that they will study the Bible more during the week!

23.

Basic Principle: Modeling

People See,

People Do!

24.

Motivation

"People are more likely to do something that will benefit them, that they feel capable of doing,

than they are of doing something they are not certain will benefit them and feel incapable of doing."

25.

Basic Principle: Motivation

Competence breeds confidence

People pursue what is relevant to their needs

26.

Basic Principle: Motivation

Build confidence in competence, while emphasizing relevance!

27.

Model & Motivate: Opportunities

1. Introduction
2. Bible Reading
3. Big Idea
4. Sermon Structure
5. Explanation
6. Illustration
7. Conclusion
8. Delivery

28.

For Example: Explanation

1 Peter 1:22
Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, **fervently** love one another from the heart,

29.

For Example: Explanation

Let's take a look for a moment at that word "fervent" in 1Peter 1v22. Webster's dictionary defines fervent as "very hot" or "with intensity of feeling." The Greek word translated "fervent" is "ektenos" which J. Ramsey Michaels considers to be, along with its cognate form in 4:8, concerned with constancy rather than fervency in this context. So the kind of love that Peter is telling his readers to have is this fervent kind of love, maintaining the emphasis of the previous three imperatives in this section, that they persist in so doing throughout their lives.

30.

For Example: Explanation

Let's take a look for a moment at that word "fervent" in 1Peter 1v22. Webster's dictionary defines fervent as "very hot" or "with intensity of feeling." The Greek word translated "fervent" is "ektenos" which J. Ramsey Michaels considers to be, along with its cognate form in 4:8, concerned with constancy rather than fervency in this context. So the kind of love that Peter is telling his readers to have is this fervent kind of love, maintaining the emphasis of the previous three imperatives in this section, that they persist in so doing throughout their lives.

31.

Explanation Modified

Look again at verse 22, because Peter tells us how we are to love each other. He uses that word, "fervent." If you looked up that word in a concordance, you'd find that the New Testament uses it on two other occasions. One is in Luke where Jesus is praying "fervently" in the Garden of Gethsemane. The other is in Acts where the church prayed "fervently" for Peter to be released from prison. In both cases you get the feeling that they did not give up, Jesus and the church kept on praying. That's what Peter is telling us here in v22 – we are to keep on loving, no matter what. If you skimmed through the letter, you'd also see the word in 4:8, where Peter again writes about fervent love, and there tells us what it looks like to keep on loving without giving up . . .

32.

For Example: Bible Reading

(Bible reading demonstrated in line with Sunukjian's instruction on Bible readings. Once contrary to his advice, then following his advice.

See Sunukjian, p295.)

33.

For Example: Illustration

So let me illustrate what Paul is saying here in Romans 12:2 when he writes, "Do not be conformed to this world." We all know how J.B.Philips put it, "Do not let the world squeeze you into its mold." It's like pouring dessert into a mold, each of the contours of the mold become the shape of the dessert once it cools in the fridge.

34.

For Example: Illustration

So let me illustrate what Paul is saying here in Romans 12:2 when he writes, "Do not be conformed to this world." We all know how J.B.Philips put it, "Do not let the world squeeze you into its mold." It's like pouring dessert into a mold, each of the contours of the mold become the shape of the dessert once it cools in the fridge.

35.

Illustration Modified

So Paul wrote, "Do not be conformed to this world." Or as one writer put it, "Do not let the world squeeze you into its mold." You've probably seen a dessert take the shape of its mold, so what does this look like in your life? When the workers are standing around the coffee machine joking inappropriately, Paul is saying don't be squeezed into the same pattern of behavior. Or when… (another visualization). And the next thing Paul writes will tell us how we are to live differently . . .

36.

Meet Your BBB Guide

APPENDIX 3

BUILDING BETTER BRIDGES GUIDE

The following eight charts were presented in comb binding to the seminar participants. These are essentially version 1.1 of this tool, which will continue to be revised over time. The latest version will be available from the author.

1. Introductions
Create a hunger for this text!

Typical Example	Listener thinks	Improved Example
"We all struggle with questions. I've been struggling with the question of having faith like Abraham did. *. . .* *I'll be honest with you, I've struggled to prepare for this morning. It's been a real battle. I've spent hours struggling over this* *. . .* *and the Holy Spirit led me to a verse. This message will help you have faith like Abraham! Turn with me to Genesis chapter X . . ."*	Faith like Abraham? I don't struggle with that, how about faith when lying seems the only option, or faith when prayer goes unanswered? I'm glad you've spent hours struggling over this, because in my life I don't have that kind of time to be in the Bible. I'll just listen to your sermon instead. The Holy Spirit led you to a verse? Wow! That doesn't happen to me, I'm glad I've got such a spiritual pastor to tell me the truth.	*We all struggle with questions. For example, perhaps you've prayed for something for years, but no answer. You feel like giving up. Maybe you have given up. Why does God seem to ignore my prayers? We are going to look at a passage, the kind of passage that you could turn to later this week and study yourself, the kind of passage that will help us understand this question so many of us face. Let's turn together to Genesis chap.X, let's see how God's Word will make life that bit clearer . . .*

Suggestions for MODELING	Suggestions for MOTIVATING	Dangers
Having created a need for the sermon, clearly point to the text (not the message) for the source of relevant answers to life's issues and needs (in an inductive sermon without the text read at the start, point to the text anyway as the source of help . . . "we are going to see, in a few minutes, a passage that will help us with this question.") If the introduction raises a need, demonstrate the thought process that might lead an individual to reading that particular text (without preaching it before you are ready to preach it)	Include an affirmation of the listeners' ability to do the same – "Turn with me to xyz, let's look together at a passage that will help us, the kind of passage you could turn to this week at home…" Introduce sermon with a need that is relevant to daily life, not just an abstract faith issue that would not enter the minds of non-preachers in normal life.	Do not let vulnerability in regard to your struggle in preparation demotivate people with less time than you for Bible study. Do not imply supernatural revelation by stating that "the Holy Spirit" led me to this verse! This demotivates people who do not experience what they understand you to mean by that.

2. Bible Reading
Help listeners feel like competent Bible readers!

Typical Example	Listener thinks	Improved Example
Turn in your Bibles to 1st Peter 1:3-5. As I read this passage, look for the two things Peter states are the result of God's mercy *. . . (Read passage)* *Did you see? Interesting stuff, isn't it? We have new birth into a living hope and into an inheritance!*	Ok, another passage, preacher doesn't sound excited about it, but I suppose we should read it anyway. Did I see two things? No, I heard mercy then I got confused. There were so many things in those verses. I must have missed what I was supposed to see. I really am bad at spotting the point of the text.	*Here's a short passage, but it is very relevant to us here this morning. Peter is writing to some Christians facing various difficulties in their daily lives. Notice how he is praising God. Notice that in God's mercy, they have been born into two things. First they have been born into a living hope. Second, they have been born into their inheritance. Their hope is built on the resurrection of Jesus, and their inheritance is being kept safely for them. Let's read this passage, notice the living hope and the inheritance . . . (Read passage) . . . So, because of God's mercy, they were born into a living hope, verse 3 – you saw it. Then an inheritance, verse 4. Great.*

Suggestions for MODELING	Suggestions for MOTIVATING	Dangers
Set up the situational context, overview the written context and the flow of thought. Model looking for a unit of thought, think aloud and show why it is a legitimate unit. Show enthusiasm toward the text being preached. "This is a tough passage and hard to get anything good out of, but I came up with something here…" not helpful model or motivation! (And if your passage is tough, acknowledge and point to another connected and easier access passage) Do not be satisfied with affirming the interest value of a text (interesting stuff isn't it?) . . . why not ask the two key questions – so what was the author's idea here? And how can we apply it in our lives?	Sunukjian encourages preachers to introduce a passage by telling people the point that the writer is making, clearly stating and restating the truth that will be noticed as the passage is read. Then as the passage is read, the listeners hear the point, it is reinforced as being truly biblical, and they feel more confident in their ability to read the Bible for themselves! (Sunukjian, 295) "When experience with a subject *is followed* by a positive (pleasant) consequence, the probability is increased that the subject will be approached again in the future." (Mager, 46)	Do not ask listeners to spot something in the text, but not state what they are to spot. They will feel like a failure. Do not set up a reading, but then fail to follow-up after the reading. Restate what they saw and affirm that they saw it. Do not miss the opportunity to communicate enthusiasm for the biblical text. Do not miss the opportunity to suggest that the listeners might want to come back to this text later. Beware of putting the main text on a screen for all to read. This may communicate that the Bible is like a newspaper: snippets displaced from their printed context lose nothing. (Sunukjian, 240)

3. Big Idea

Show how finding the text's idea is achievable & relevant

Typical Example	Listener thinks	Improved Example
So in light of 1ˢᵗ Corinthians 15:50-58, I say to you this morning, stay in the action until corporal transaction! That's what we need to be clear about, that's the fact that must grip us all this morning – stay in the action until corporal transaction.	That's clever, it even rhymes. I can never come up with pithy grabbers like that! And how did the preacher come up with it? I don't see that here in the text we just read (1Cor.15:50-58) And even if I could see it coming from the text, and could do that kind of clever rhyme stuff, I'm still not clear what the relevance is. So why bother? I'll just wait and come back for another one next week!	*So looking at what Paul wrote to the Corinthians here – the need for our bodies to be changed in verse 50, the fact that our bodies will be changed in verses 51-53, the fact that death has no hold over us, verses 54-57 . . . so we should give everything we've got in this body, because this life is not all we've got, verse 58. The message for us in this text is this: use your body for Jesus now, because He'll be fixing it up real good after this life anyway. So when you're tired and your neighbor wants to talk about Jesus – go for it! If you're thinking about going into missions, but are scared it might shorten your life – go for it! Etc…*

Suggestions for MODELING	Suggestions for MOTIVATING	Dangers
The wording of the idea is not the issue here, but demonstrating clearly how to derive the idea – showing the relationship between the sections (as they yield their points), and the whole (the big idea) is important, if you want people to do the same thing. If appropriate, demonstrate the steps of thought from text to idea – careful and clear use of inductive Biblical preaching. Clear connection to text, and specific connection to life – demonstrate how relevant the Bible is to life. If the wording of the text provides a relevant and clear author's idea, try to keep that wording for the preaching idea.	If the sermon is conducive to the possibility, consider an inductive sermon with each step in the thought process being clearly stated and restated – make sure the feeling of the listener is "I can do that!" If the idea is worded very cleverly, at some point in the sermon, be sure to put it in normal terms that others might feel more able to achieve. Consider the value of a plain but less memorable big idea, versus one that is clever, pithy and possibly memorable. The latter makes for an impressive and (possibly) memorable sermon, but the former may inspire more personal Bible study.	Preaching an idea that is not clearly connected to, nor derived from the text. An idea that remains disconnected from real life. If people do not see the relevance to their life, they are unlikely to pursue the same process on a personal level. Overly clever wording may deter "non-wordsmiths" . . .

4. Sermon Structure

Clearly show how the text shapes your thinking

Typical Example	Listener thinks	Improved Example
For my next point, jump back to what Paul wrote in verse 3, and also 8, 11 and 18-19 *. . . (preaches his next point) . . .* *Now, having seen that, turn with me to Genesis 50:20 . . . (preaches next point)*	Seems like Paul wrote this in paragraphs, but that must be irrelevant because we keep skipping around. I'm confused. Genesis? Why not? I'd probably jump to . . . Psalm 23. I wonder what the preacher will do next Sunday?	*So Paul begins his thinking here with that thought about God the Father. Notice what he moves to next . . . the next paragraph in his letter is about God the Son. He's going somewhere with this thought. (preaches next movement) . . . so the Father chose us, verses 3-6, the Son purchased us, verses 7-12, and finally, the Spirit has put a sold sign on us, verses 13 and 14, let's look at those two verses together.*

Suggestions for MODELING	Suggestions for MOTIVATING	Dangers
Explain the process involved in approaching a text of this genre – how does that determine the flow of thought? Let the obvious shape of the text shape the thought structure of the sermon. People can see it as it stands, do not confuse them by jumping around the text unless absolutely necessary Be very hesitant to jump to a different text – and if you do, explain rationale, otherwise you may inadvertently model random passage hopping.	Make sure the structure of message relates to the obvious structure of text (these are literate people holding the text) if different, then explain why. Do not hide the thought process of sermon shaping. Explain how when you read the text, the thought seems to change slightly in verse X, or there is a transitional statement in the text . . . oh yes, they can see that too.	Making a text or texts fit the thought of the preacher. Listeners can look for the writer's thought, they have to wait until Sunday for the preacher's thought.

5. Explanation & Support Material

Explain and support to model good study and to motivate personal study

Typical Example	Listener thinks	Improved Example
Let's take a look for a moment at that word "fervent" in (1Peter 1)v22. Webster's dictionary defines fervent as "very hot" or "with intensity of feeling." . . . The Greek word translated "fervent" is "ektenos" which J. Ramsey Michaels considers to be, along with its cognate form in 4:8, concerned with constancy rather than fervency in this context. . . .So the kind of love that Peter is telling his readers to have is this fervent kind of love, maintaining the emphasis of the previous three imperatives in this section, that they persist in so doing throughout their lives.	I'll do that too! When I feel like it, I'll look up the odd word here and there in Websters (note – both definitions are unhelpful here) I can't do that Greek stuff, who's Ramsey Michaels, and what's a cognate? Obviously I'm not trained enough for Bible study. I'd better leave Bible study for the experts, like my preacher. I don't care about that, it all seems so distant and irrelevant, so I won't study the Bible for myself in depth like this. I have real life struggles, why do I care about the kind of word Peter used for those Christians?	*Look again at verse 22, because Peter tells us how we are to love each other. He uses that word, "fervent." If you looked up that word in a concordance, you'd find that the New Testament uses it on two other occasions. One is in Luke where Jesus is praying "fervently" in the Garden of Gethsemane. The other is in Acts where the church prayed "fervently" for Peter to be released from prison. In both cases you get the feeling that they did not give up, Jesus and the church kept on praying. That's what Peter is telling us here in v22 – we are to keep on loving, no matter what. If you skimmed through the letter, you'd also see the word in 4:8, where Peter again writes about fervent love, and there tells us what that looks like . . .*

5. Explanation & Support Material cont.

Explain and support to model good study and to motivate personal study

Suggestions for MODELING	Suggestions for MOTIVATING	Dangers
Model the process of determining the meaning of a word by observing its use in relevant Bible texts, and especially in the specific context of the passage. Do not dump full range of possible meanings into a particular usage, but highlight importance of context in determining meaning.

Encourage accurate imagination to get listener's into the reality of the historical text, rather than staying aloof from the reality by working in abstractions. Use effective description that creates visual images of the text.

Ask and answer the question, "how does the writer develop the idea?" If it is clear in the text, help people see that before moving on to other support material.

Model the use of the English Bible for exegesis, rather than implying insight is only available in the Greek or Hebrew. (Chapell, 109-110)

Avoid speculative typology, perhaps even legitimate typology. Listeners will copy the process. If necessary, begin with the anti-type in the New Testament and then move back into the Old Testament . | Explain process of reading through a book looking for a term, or using simple concordance search, in order to examine the use of that term.

Refer to and make available accessible expositional commentaries high on relevance.

Avoid the language of direct revelation. Hopefully you would have prayed about elements of the text that were unclear, but be careful not to convey the idea that God spoke audibly in response to that. This is highly de-motivating for listeners who do not experience what they believe you are describing.

Avoid telling people the text does not mean what it says. They need to trust their Bible to be motivated to use it (since original languages are inaccessible to them).

Handle corrections of the text people have very carefully. Don't undermine their version. (Chapell, 124-125) | Poor support. Dictionary definitions, statistics, unnecessary quotations, parallel passages and biblical illustrations. (Sunukjian, 128)

Impossible or out of reach support such as unnecessary reference to the original language (even worse to mention the term Greek or Hebrew, and usually worse still to pronounce the word). Also be wary of historical or scholarly experts that seem inaccessible to others.

Irrelevant support material is anything that does not obviously support the thought of the message towards an end that is relevant to life.

Don't humiliate or embarrass when critiquing a common view, "by causing a painful loss of dignity." (Mager, 59) |

6. Illustrations & Applications

Illustrate interestingly, but be sure to visualize relevant applications too

Typical Example	Listener thinks	Improved Example
So let me illustrate what Paul is saying here in Romans 12:2 when he writes, "Do not be conformed to this world." We all know how J.B.Phillips put it, "Do not let the world squeeze you into its mold." *. . .* *It's like pouring a dessert into a mold, each of the contours of the mold become the shape of the dessert once it cools in the fridge.*	Actually I don't know how J.B. Phillips put it, I'm probably the only person here who doesn't. And who is J.B.Phillips anyway? I know one thing, and that is that I don't know what I'm supposed to know. That's an interesting illustration. The whole mold thing really sheds light on the text. Fascinating. But how do I live this out in my life?	*So Paul wrote, "Do not be conformed to this world." Or as one writer put it, "Do not let the world squeeze you into its mold." You've probably seen a dessert take the shape of its mold, so what does that look like in your life? When the workers are standing around the coffee machine joking inappropriately, Paul is saying don't be squeezed into the same pattern of behavior. Or when (…another visualization). And the next thing Paul writes will tell us how we are to live differently . . .*

Suggestions for MODELING	Suggestions for MOTIVATING	Dangers
Use interesting and varied illustrations, but be careful to model both understanding an author's idea, and also moving that to life application. Instead of illustrating a passage with another passage, thereby modeling "treading water" in Bible trivia, rather move to a contemporary visualization of good application of the idea. (Sunukjian, 133-134)	Beware of stories of personal success, especially those that involve the Bible – such as your own study, your Bible training, your success in witnessing, etc. Breed confidence in their competence, not in yours alone. Be careful with quotes (see also "Support Material"), A passing reference to D.L.Moody may not be a problem, but frequent references to Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas, or Sangster, Schillebeeckx and Schleiermacher may simply make the listener feel inadequately trained for personal Bible reading. (Know the audience) If the quote is worth having, use it, but don't automatically name the source unless that helps your listener.	Do not preach a sermon that has no relevance visualized – that is, description of the idea applied in real life. Do not make illustrative material out of reach – unknown sources, technical vocabulary, situations unknown to the listener. Do not set up negative emotion with introductory phrases like, "we all know the story of…" or "it ought to be perfectly obvious that…" (Mager, 57)

7. Conclusions

Motivate listener to apply the text! (and study it more)

Typical Example	Listener thinks	Improved Example
So there you have it, Isaiah chapter 40, and next week chapter 41. *. . .* *In this morning's message we have seen how the God we trust is both great and gracious, what an awesome God we have!*	That's Isaiah 40 finished. Now we wait for chapter 41 next week. That was a great message about God, I needed that. (But since Isaiah 40 is now done, there may be no expectation of going back into the passage personally.) Great, excellent message. Now then, back to real life.	*So Isaiah 40:10-31, a passage we can all go back to again and again. Verses 12-26 show the greatness of God – He can handle anything you may face this week. Verses 27-31 show the grace of God – He cares about you as you face life this week. This message may be done, but this passage may be exactly what you need to study again this week as life hits yet again. God is strong enough to handle it, He strengthens you . . . as you wait on Him. Will you wait on Him, will you look into this passage for perspective whatever may hit this week? Isaiah 40 is clear – trust God!*

Suggestions for MODELING	Suggestions for MOTIVATING	Dangers
Deliberately tie the concluding application / exhortation to the text, rather than simply to the message. Final application of idea should clearly relate to the text and to the author's idea (see Big Idea) Make sure concluding application ties the Bible to life (relevancy)	Include suggestion / expectation of further study in and application of the same passage. Possibly suggest further study in context to reinforce this passage. Possibly suggest alternative passage related to same subject. (Ericksen, 70) Possibly invite feedback as people continue to study the passage, such as further appropriate areas of application they might consider, having studied it more.	It is easy to put closure on a passage, rather than on a message. The message may be finished, but the application (and further study of that passage) continues. Avoid asking introspective questions in the last line of the message. Listeners are likely to answer "no" since the message has not had time to take root yet, which ends the message on a negative. (Sunukjian, 249)

8. Delivery

Deliver in a natural manner that does not overly impress the listeners

Note

This category is unique in that it is not one part of a sermon, but the medium through which the whole sermon is delivered. Consequently, the other seven elements will be filtered through the delivery of the preacher. It is important to consider the style, the manner and the attitude of delivery to ensure that communication is clear and effective, without demotivating personal Bible study.

Suggestions for MODELING	Suggestions for MOTIVATING	Dangers
Model and explain the process of Bible study whenever possible. Model an attitude of submission to the text, interest in the text, desire to apply the idea of the text.	Be sensitive to the listening and processing capacity of the listeners. Avoid "presenting information in larger units, or at a faster pace, than a student can assimilate." (Mager, 58) Be deliberately enthusiastic in delivery. Avoid, "presenting information in a monotone, . . . using only a single mode of presentation (no variety)" (Mager, 62) Be careful not to overwhelm people with information, especially if preaching without notes (see danger of "impressing" in next column). Select the words you use carefully. Over time they either diminish or increase the joy and motivation of the congregation. (Sunukjian, 266)	Be clear, but be careful not to impress the listeners excessively through the delivery. A natural style that "makes it look easy" is more accessible than an impressive style that sets the speaker apart from everyone else. Stott writes, "We should urge our hearers to 'test' and 'evaluate' our teaching. We should not want people to be moonstruck by our preaching, to hang spell-bound on our words, and to soak them up like sponges." Rather we should create "Bereans" as in Acts 17:11. As pastors we should lead our hearers "to good grazing pasture where they feed themselves." (Stott, 177)

APPENDIX 4

BUILDING BETTER BRIDGES SUMMARY

     The following two pages were presented, back to back, in laminated form to the

seminar participants. Again, these are essentially version 1.1 of this tool, which will

continue to be revised over time. The latest version will be available from the author.

Building Better Bridges Summary

1. Intro
Create a hunger for this text!

Model
Create need and point to text, not just message.

Show why a reader might choose this text for that need.

Motivate
Affirm their ability to select and study a text for themselves.

Introduce with a need that is relevant to life.

Take Care
Do not imply supernatural revelation by stating that "the Holy Spirit" led me to this verse!

2. Bible Reading
Help listeners feel like competent Bible readers!

Model
Overview the context before reading, explain if text is a unit of thought, and ask about the author's idea and applying it.

Motivate
Preview what the writer is writing before reading the text. Make people feel confident that they can read well!

Take Care
Do not ask people to spot something in the text, but not tell them what.

Do not put main text on a screen.

3. Big Idea
Show how finding the text's idea is achievable & relevant

Model
Show how the idea comes from the text.

Use the words of the text whenever possible.

Motivate
Show the process of thinking through a text.

Consider using a plain idea rather than clever one.

Take Care
Beware of overly clever wording which deters "non-wordsmiths"

Principle of modeling:
People See, People Do

Principle of motivation:
Build confidence in competence, while emphasizing relevance

4. Sermon Structure
Clearly show how the text shapes your thinking

Model
Notice the genre

Let shape of text shape sermon

Usually avoid jumping to other texts.

Motivate
Mention when text obviously shifts in thought or content, or has transitional statements. They can see that too.

Take Care
Do not make the text fit your thought. Fit your thought to the text. They can access that all week long!

5. Explanation & Support
Explain and support to model good study and motivate personal study

Model
Understand words from their context.

Imagine the reality of text rather than using abstractions

Model use of the English Bible for study.

Motivate
Simply explain study process in a way that others are also capable.

Do not suggest God gave you direct insight into a passage.

Don't undermine their version.

Take Care
Avoid poor support material.

Avoid inaccessible support: Gk/Heb, obscure history or scholar experts

Don't humiliate when critiquing a common view.

6. Illustrations & Applications
Illustrate interestingly, but visualize relevant applications

Model
Move to contemporary visualization of the idea applied, don't "tread water" by illustrating with another passage.

Motivate
Don't be the hero in your illustrations.

Don't name unknown scholars when quoting them.

Take Care
Do not use unknown vocabulary

Do not say, "we all know the story of…" or "obviously…"

7. Conclusion
Motivate listener to apply the text! (and study it more)

Model
Clearly tie final exhortation to text rather than message.

Clearly connect final application of idea with life.

Motivate
Suggest further study in passage and in context.

Invite feedback as they study the passage: more applications.

Take Care
Do not put closure on the passage, just the message.

Do not end with an introspective question.

8. Delivery
A natural manner that does not overly impress

Model
Model Bible study process while delivering.

Model attitude of submission to and interest in the text.

Motivate
Don't overwhelm with speed or amount of info.

Be enthusiastic.

No monotony!

Take Care
Be natural rather than impressive.

Don't make them dependent on you, make them Bereans (Acts 17:11).

The Bible Study Bridge

Take a legitimate unit
of Scripture:

STEP 1
Study in context for author's idea & author's intent

(Back then . . .)

STEP 2
How should I apply the idea in my/our context

(. . . Today)

Context		**Idea**		**Intent**	**Context**		**For transformed:**	**Biblical?**
Historical	**Written**	What is the author writing about?	What is he saying about what he's writing about?	To explain so it is understood . . . and / or . . . To convince so it is believed . . . and / or . . . To motivate so it is done	**Personal**	**Communal**	**Affections:** Love / values . . . and / or . . . **Belief:** Know / believe . . . and / or . . . **Conduct:** Do	Is my application of the idea consistent with the general teaching of Scripture
When? Where? Why? Who? To? Culture?	Genre Form Tone Location Before After				Relationships Private life Spiritual life Work life Etc.	Marriage? Family? Friends? Church? Work? Etc.		

APPENDIX 5

SEMINAR EVALUATION FORM

Building Better Bridges – Seminar Evaluation

Each year I typically preach . . .	Once a year	Once a quarter	Monthly	Twice a Month	Weekly
I have studied preaching formally (eg. at Bible College, or a preaching course)	No	Yes:	_____		
1. The main idea of this seminar (deliberately preaching to model and motivate personal Bible study) was new to me.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. This idea is very important for preachers to understand and implement in their preaching.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. Before this seminar, I have missed significant opportunities to model Bible study skills because I was unaware of the issue.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. Before this seminar, I have missed significant opportunities to motivate personal Bible study because I was unaware of the issue.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. What the instructor intended to achieve in this seminar was clear.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. The teaching style of the seminar was effective.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. The resources, notes, and tools provided will be useful to me.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. Because of this seminar, I am now equipped to produce sermons that will both model and motivate personal Bible study.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. I recommend the Building Better Bridges seminar to other preachers.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Please answer the following questions in the space provided (use back if necessary)

A. What would you highlight as the three greatest strengths of this seminar?

B. What would you suggest as the three things that would improve this seminar?

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VITA

Peter Timothy Mead was born on April 13th, 1976, in Bristol, England. Educated in Bristol through university level, Peter received the Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies with first class honors from the University of the West of England, Bristol, in 1998. Peter spent one year at Multnomah Biblical Seminary, Portland, OR, from 1998-1999 where he received the Graduate Certificate in Biblical Studies. Peter and his wife, Melanie, returned to Portland, OR, from 2001-2004. During this time Peter earned the Master of Divinity and the Master of Arts in Biblical Studies, writing his thesis, "All Israel Will Be Saved: An Exegetical Study of Romans 11:25-27." Peter also received the B.B. Sutcliffe Expository Preaching Award upon graduation. Peter attended residencies for the Doctor of Ministry in "The Preacher and The Message" track at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary from 2005-2007. He expects to graduate with the Doctor of Ministry degree in January, 2008. Peter and Melanie have four children: Hannah, Aliyah, Mariah and Joel. Peter serves as an international Bible teacher and ministry trainer with Operation Mobilization, based in London, England.